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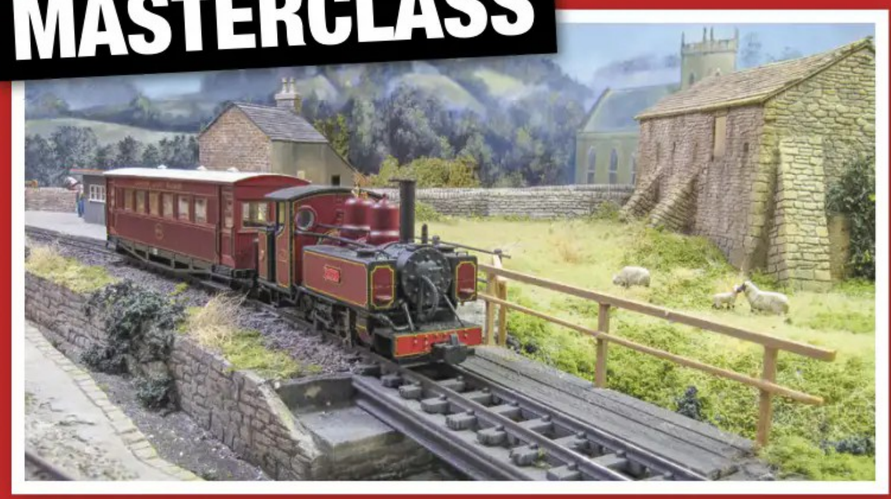

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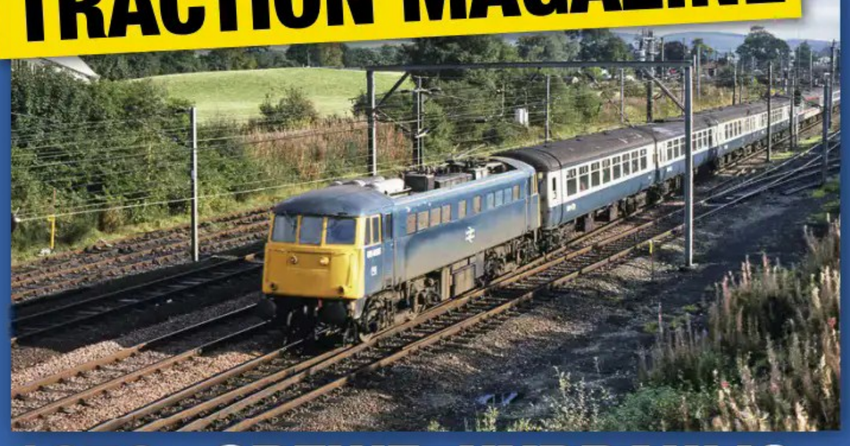

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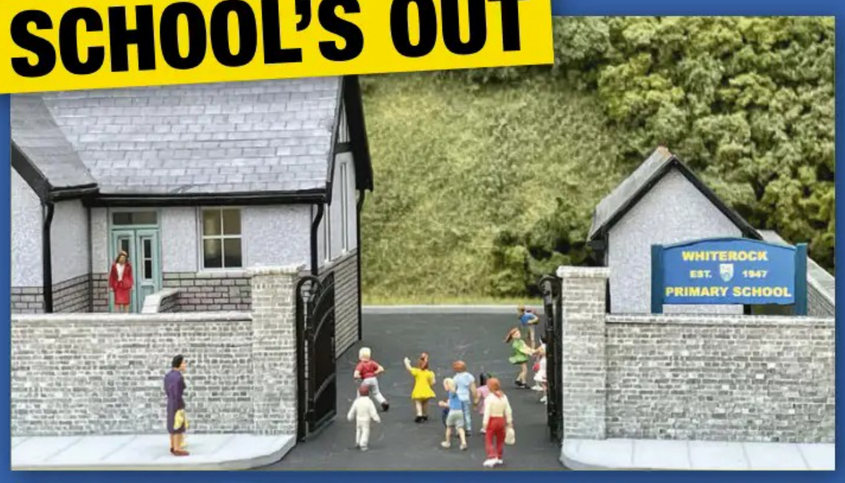

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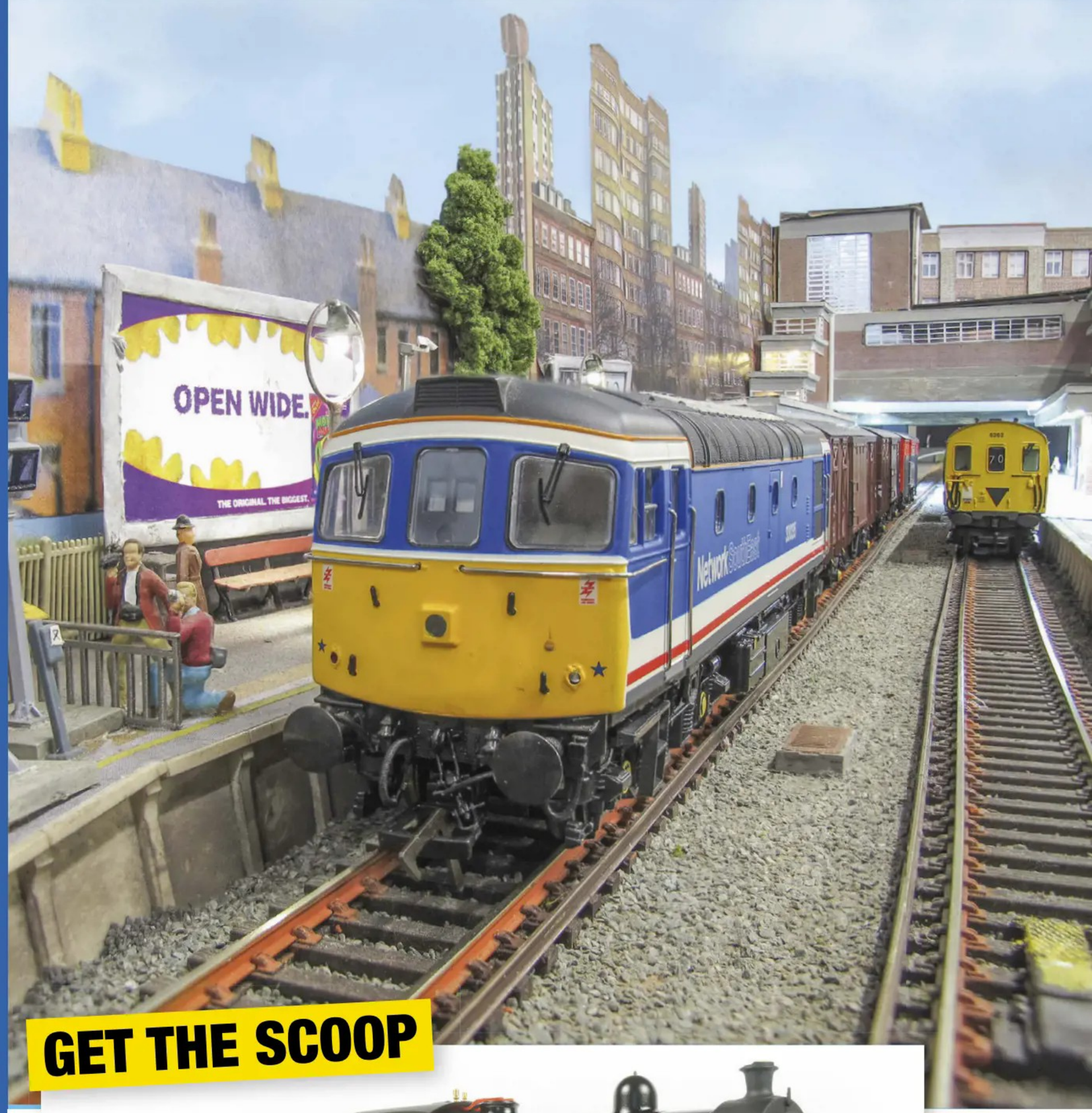

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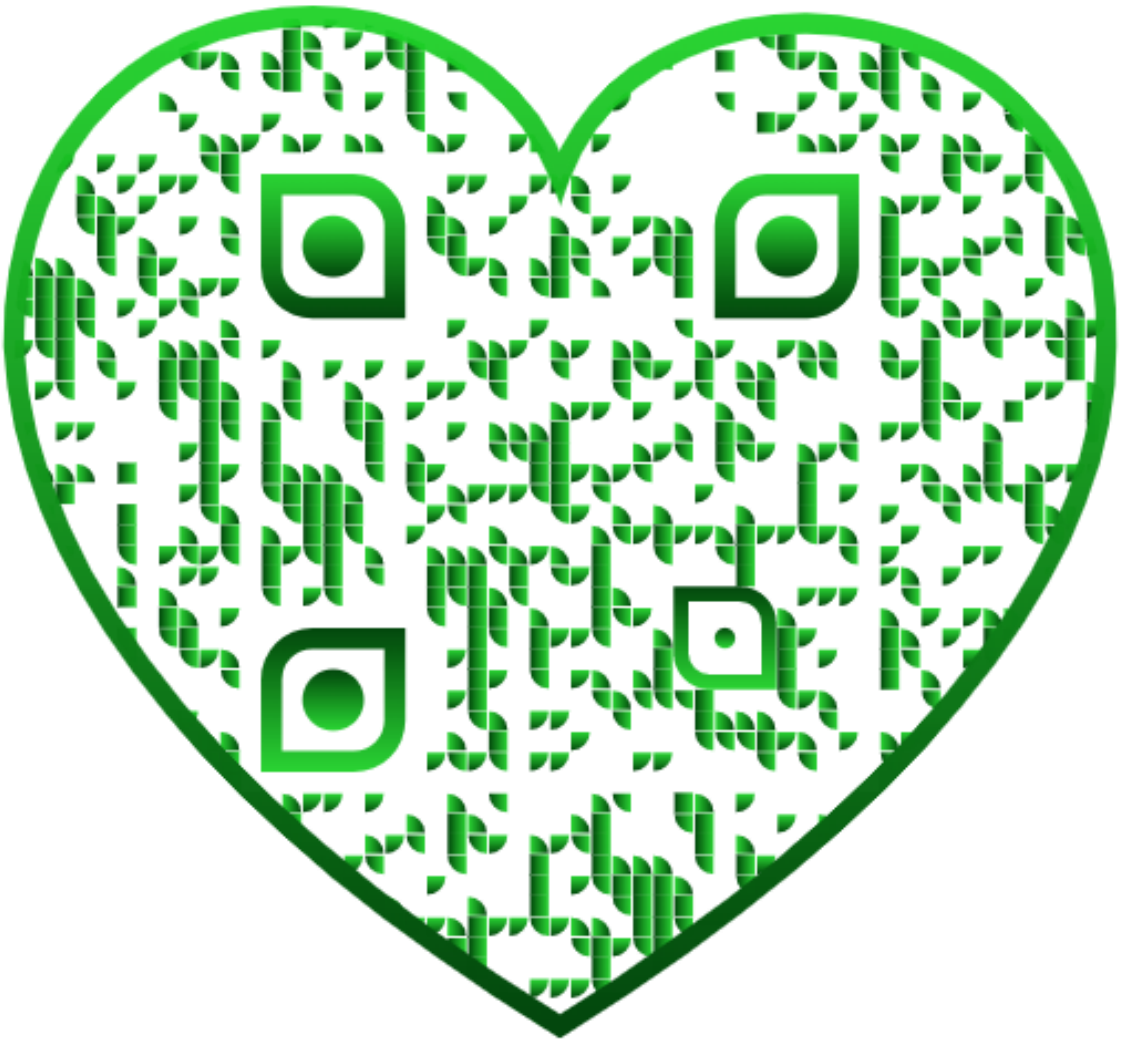

WORLD OF RAILWAYS TV

WATCH THE VIDEOS HERE

(You must have a wifi connection to stream video content)

Budget Modelling with Tony Wright: Airfix Castle

This latest video shows some simple steps to help elevate second-hand locomotives to not only sell on at profit, but also have fun getting them on the tracks again.

In conversation with Revolution Trains

World of Railways Steven Draper speaks to Ben Ando of Revolution Trains about upcoming N gauge models, including the all-steel K-Type Pullmans, Electrostar and an exclusive Class 66.

From the archives: Oulton TMD

Ahead of its appearance at The National Festival of Railway Modelling next month, we take a look back at this crowd-pleaser, which we filmed in 2021, when we spoke to owner and builder Allan Cromarty to find out what inspired him to build the layout and how he did it.

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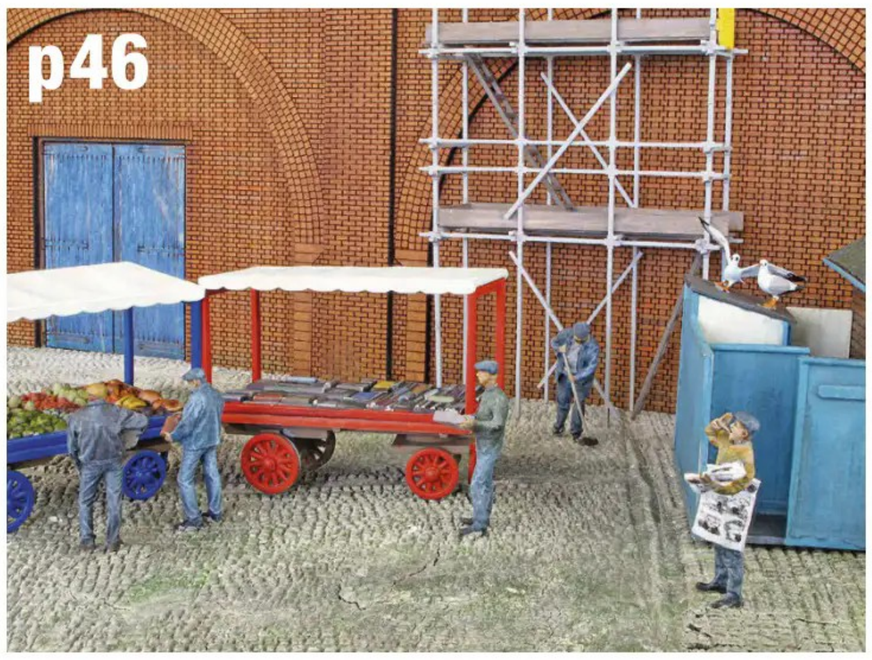

p44 How to build an N gauge parcels van

p46 Create a market cameo

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REGULARS

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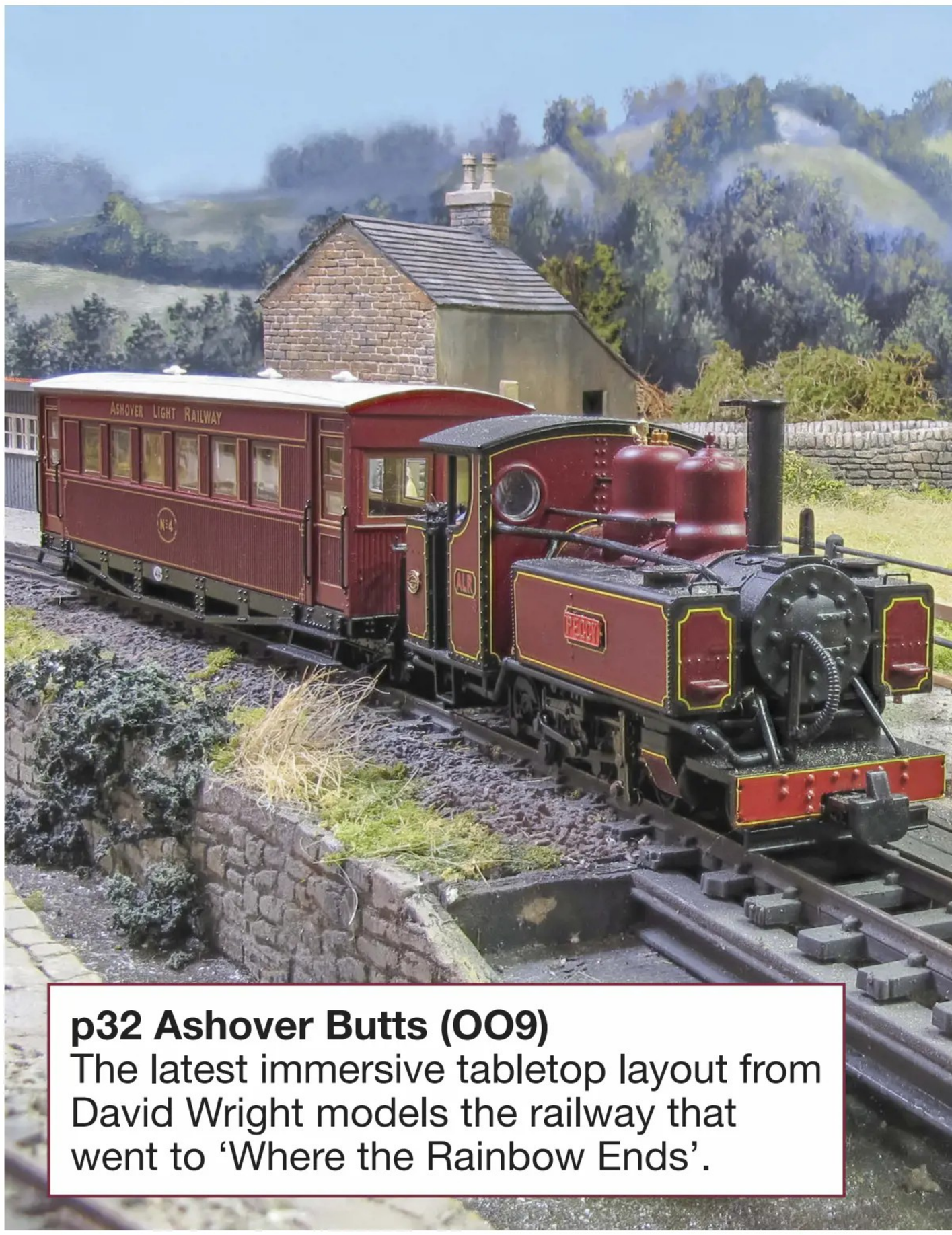
INSPIRING LAYOUTS

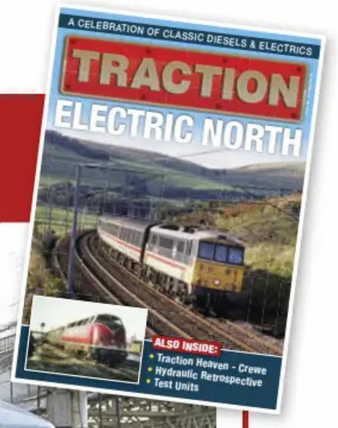


p32 Ashover Butts (OO9)
The latest immersive tabletop layout from David Wright models the railway that went to 'Where the Rainbow Ends'.

p20 Kelvin Grove/Thompson Street (OO)
The challenge of a new exhibition layout in just eight weeks spurred this club into action, with the end result proving a hit with visitors.

p88 Mitchell Junction (OO)
Donations flooded in following the 2019 vandalisation attack. Here is the story of the first donation, which has left a lasting legacy.

TRACTION



p66 Traction heaven - Crewe in the early-1970s

p72 Exploring test units continued

p74 When the BR Western Region's diesel hydraulics took some people by surprise

p80 Electrics north of Carlisle on the line over Beattock

LATEST REVIEWS

p116 Heljan Class 104

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p124 Hornby Class 43 High-Speed Train pack

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p128 Hornby Avanti West Coast Class 390 Pendolino 'Cop 26'

p130 Sonic Models A5

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R30030	Cl87 City of Glasgow	**£196.20**
R30203	Class 121 Coca-Cola	**£87.30**
R30152	GBRf Class 66 Sector	**£87.30**
R30180	BR Class 37 Intercity	**£87.30**
R30013	R&H 48DS Gower Princess	**£98.10**
R3896	R&H 88DS BR Green	**£102.59**
R30172	BR Cl. 101 Strathclyde	**£121.50**
R30141	GBRF Class 08	**£179.99**
R30301	TXS BR Cl. 08 SOUND	**£237.60**
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R8073	RH Point	**£11.85**
R8074	LH Curved Point	**£18.85**
R8075	RH Curved Point	**£18.85**
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31-461A	C Class SR Black	**£106.20**
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32-131A	GWR 4575	**£140.20**

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32-612A	Cl. 90 Freightliner green	**£195.45**
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31-502A	Cl158 WPTE Metro	**£280.45**
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NR-P993B	BP Grey no. BPO67082	**£13.45**
NR-P993C	BP Grey no. BPO67095	**£13.45**
NR-P993DW	BPGrey BPO67168 wth.	**£14.25**
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NR-P993FW	BPGrey BPO67184 wth.	**£14.25**
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NR-P994B	BP Green no. BPO67162	**£13.45**
NR-P994C	BP Green no. BPO67368	**£13.45**
NR-P994DW	BP Green no. BPO67765	**£14.25**
NR-P994EW	BP Green no. BPO67783.	**£14.25**
NR-P994FW	BP Green no. BPO67574.	**£14.25**
NR-P995A	BP Black no. BPO65762	**£13.45**
NR-P995B	BP Black no. BPO65764	**£13.45**
NR-P995C	BP Black no. BPO65771	**£13.45**
NR-P995DW	BP Black no. BPO65770	**£14.25**
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T. Smart ★★★★★

I sold some used items to Rails recently, handled by Jake in the second-hand department.

All went very smoothly - once I'd packaged the items up, it was collected free of charge and I got a good price that was transferred direct to my bank a day after they received the items.

My first port of call for all buying and selling, new and used. A+

S. Barltett ★★★★★

Popped in last week to have a quick look. Wow, blast from the past! Huge collection of vintage toys, like a kid in a sweet shop. Recommend to anyone, shop assistant was very friendly and helpful, I'll definitely be going again.

R. Smalley ★★★★★

Perfect service from Rails as usual. Excellent packaging, quick delivery and outstanding customer service from Joe, who is friendly, helpful and goes out of his way to provide assistance, even when the circumstances are outside his control.

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D. Ager ★★★★★

I'm an international buyer, and particularly a fan of British N Gauge, my orders have always been fulfilled and packed above and beyond my expectations. The prices even factoring in the current exchange rate of the AUD to GDP and postage are often cheaper than what I can source here in Australia. A wide selection of manufacturers and models. I'd highly recommend this store.

D. ★★★★★

I've been a satisfied customer of Rails for a long time with my previous online orders. I'm happy to say that my first visit to the store today did not disappoint, as I expected! The service was outstanding, the staff know exactly what they're doing and are more than competent enough to help you get exactly what you're looking for. Would recommend to anyone looking for anything to try them first!

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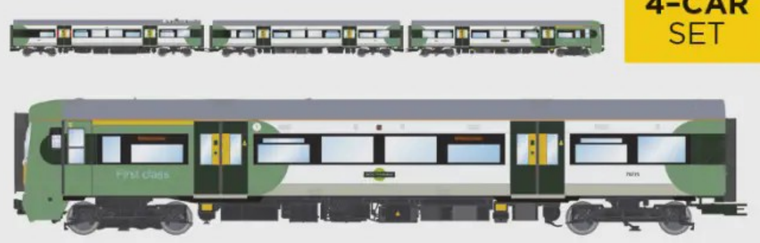

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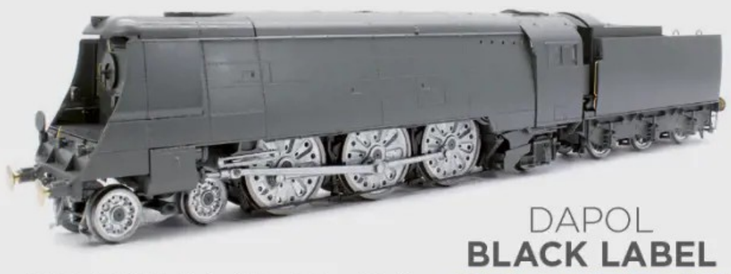

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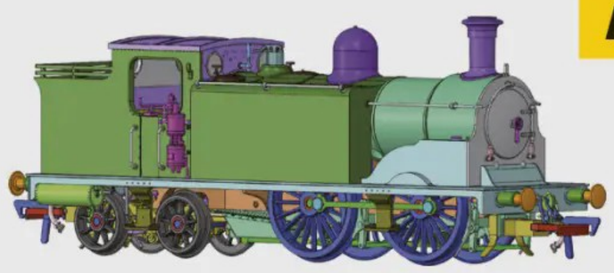

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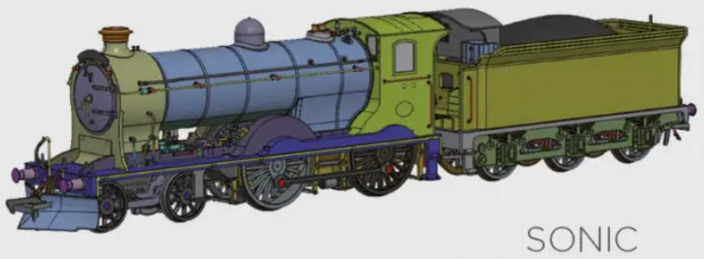

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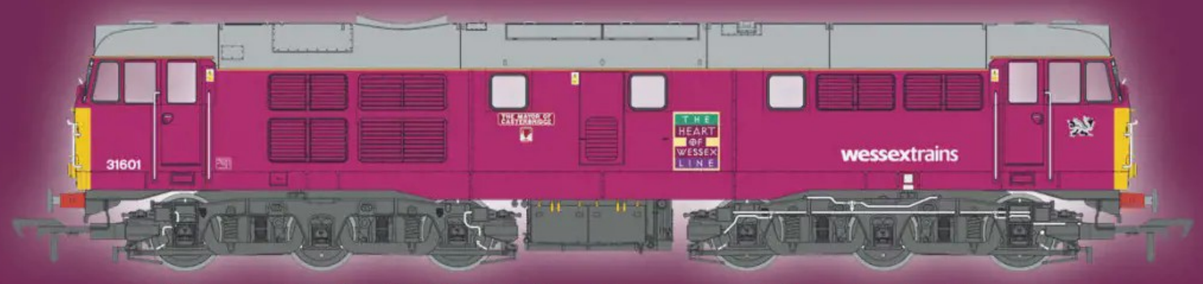

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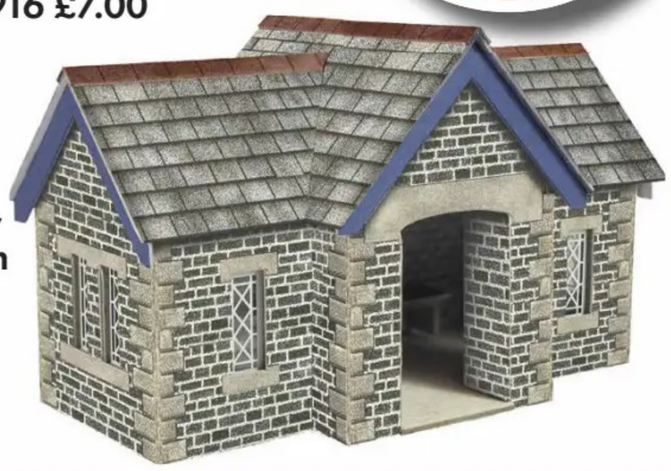

The 2nd kit in the Little Cardleywick range, a small opposite platform station shelter.

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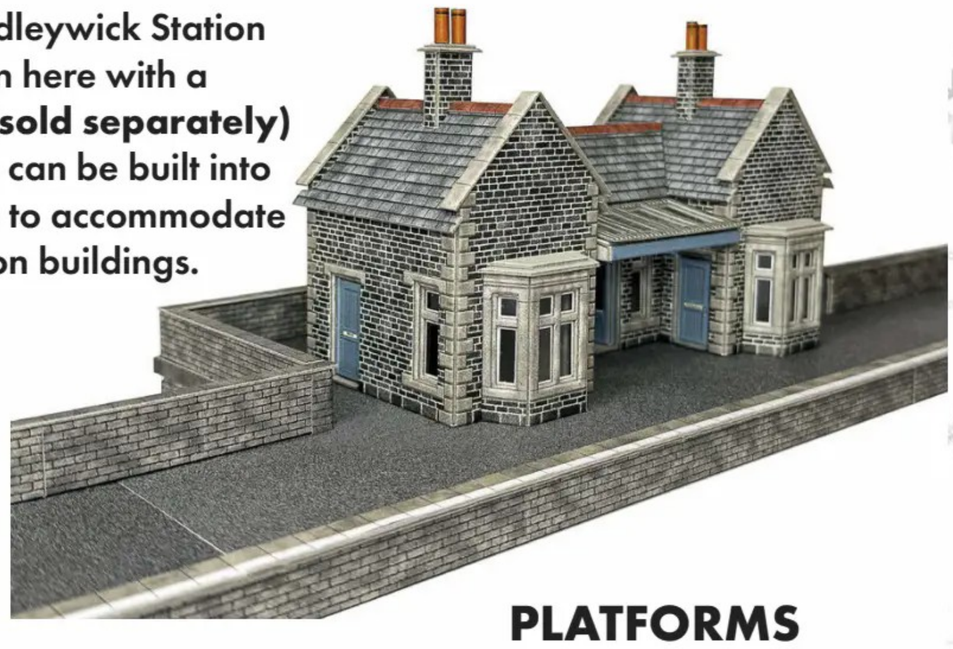

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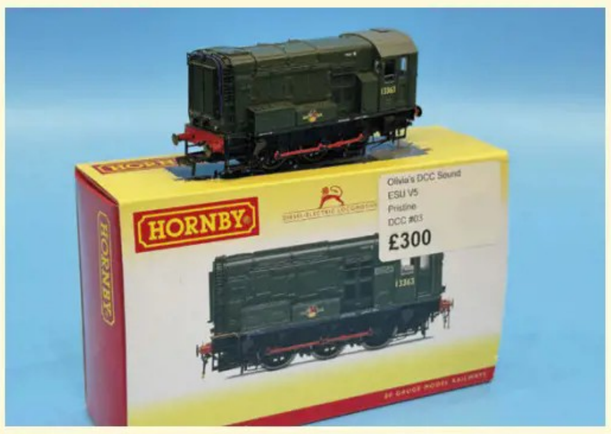

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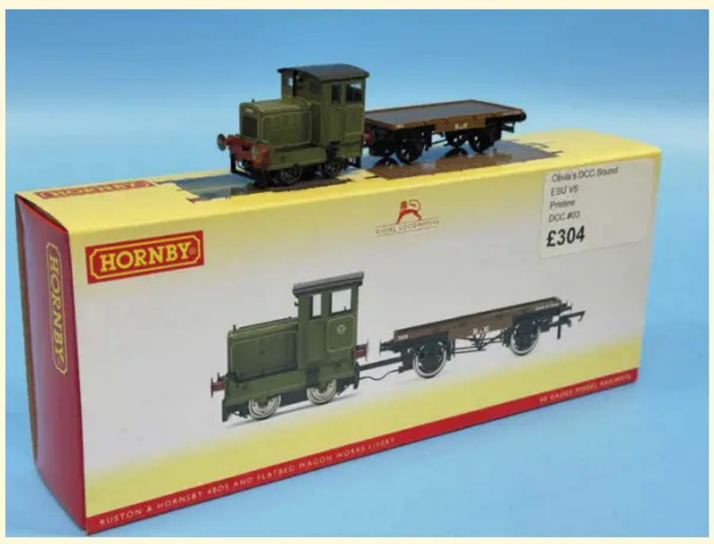

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READY, SET, REBUILD

A donation and the challenge of a new exhibition layout in just eight weeks spurred this club into action, with the end result proving a hit with exhibition goers across the country.

Words: Members of the Corby and District Model Railway Society
Photography: Phil Parker

Two underground stock, 1962 and 1938, pass through the Charles Nordon Art Deco-designed Kelvin Grove station on the east and west-bound services.

FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Kelvin Grove/ Thompson Street
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/OO
SIZE: 21ft 8in x 1ft 5in
ERA/REGION: West London NSE/1980s-modern day
LAYOUT TYPE: End-to-end

TOP RIGHT: Kelvin Grove Station during the hours of darkness, as the underground stock 1962 set is seen arriving at the station.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The S stock shoe makes a spark as it makes contact with the conductor rail.

BELOW: As the S stock slowly makes its way into the tunnel below a busy park, it cautiously passes the ongoing engineering upgrade to the system. The 1962 stock travels in the opposite direction. SR Greenunit 2-HIL Set No. 2611 also emerges on the overground network.

'Kelvin Grove' is a rebuild. The original was the brainchild of Society member, Anthony Thompson, who donated the layout to the Society to free up home space to enable him to work on other projects. One of the station names now reflects the work he did.

In 2024, the Society was invited to exhibit at the Battlefield Railway Model Weekend. It was decided we would exhibit something different. "We have the underground one in storage, let's take that!" It was pulled out of storage, put together at Headquarters and an assessment was made on what fettling would be needed.

A number of members got together and decided some improvements could be made and, with just eight weeks to go before the exhibition, the baseboards were sub-divided up, with a member of the team "taking a board" to make the necessary changes.

3rd rail overground and 4th rail underground lines running parallel would depict a time from the 1980s Network South East to the present day, so that period was decided upon, and the work started.

> "Currently, at various points along the underground lines, rail flashes are depicted when rolling stock shoes make contact with 3rd and 4th conductor rails."

Battle commences

The now Thompson Street station baseboard with its street scene was removed, along with its sub tunnels and underground station. From the platform up, with some realigning, the rebuild started with the road network redesigned with lit vehicles and ground-level buildings constructed and positioned. This included hiding speakers to give various sounds (station announcer/busker and bank burglar alarm). Lighting was replaced in the station portal and added to buildings during their construction.

The original tunnel portals led straight from the underground station with little length before the transition to the overground! It was decided to add a section (2ft) and this would involve track realignment. A park (also a removable section) and church (with sound of bells/here comes the bride) would soften this transition, with the park's pathways depicting those of London Royal Parks, along with a statue of Queen Victoria.

ABOVE: Departmental liveries 33 is held at the signal at the end of the platform while working the vans. The underground is also busy with S stock and the 1962 stock passing through.

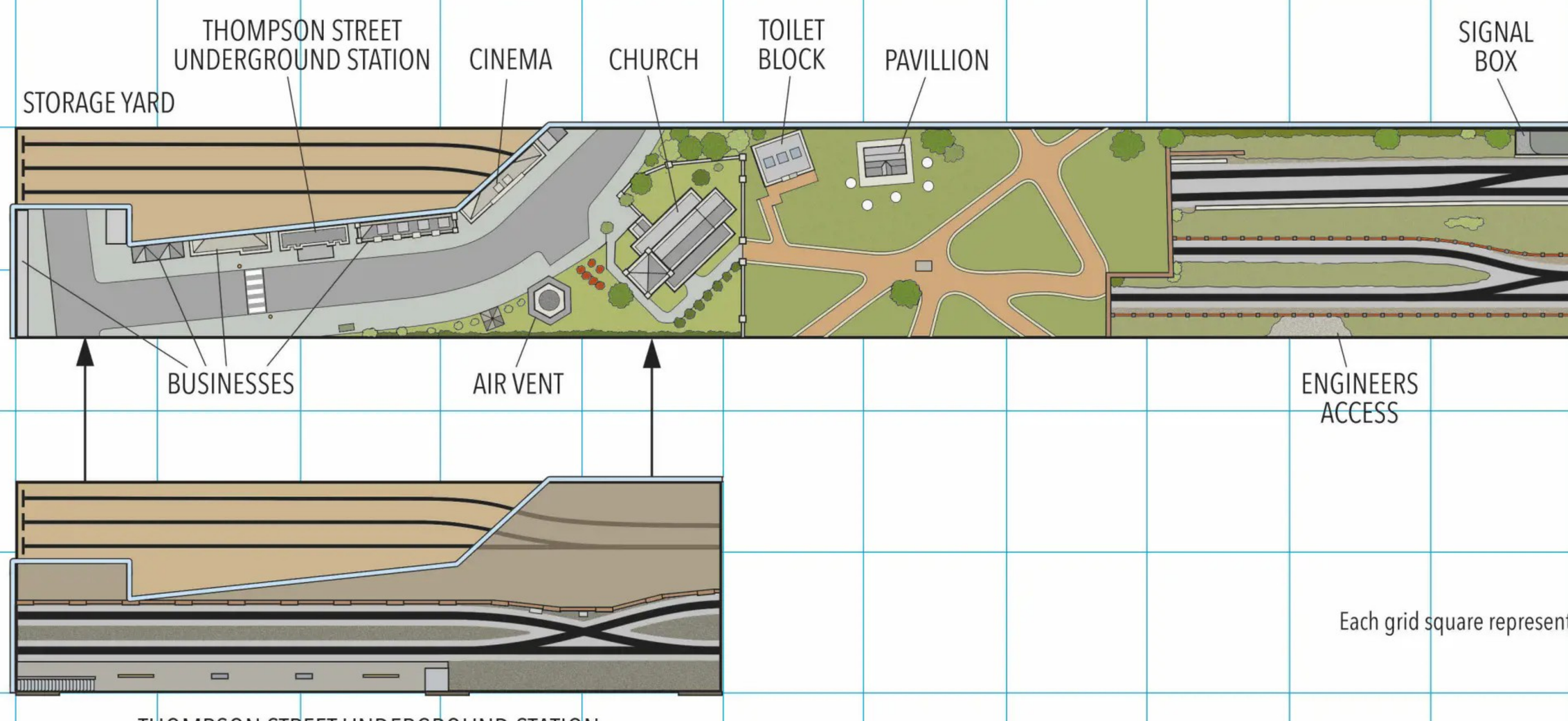
LEFT: The 1938 stock is seen leaving Kelvin Grove station heading to London.

NEAR RIGHT: A busy Kelvin Grove underground service as S stock passes the 1962.

FAR RIGHT: The 1995 stock passes under the road above Kelvin Grove station as a passenger makes their way to the stairs from a previous service.

BELOW: 'Kelvin Grove/Thompson Street' in its entirety, showing the topography. This gives a clear indication of how much of the layout is underground, making operating a challenge.

TRACKPLAN



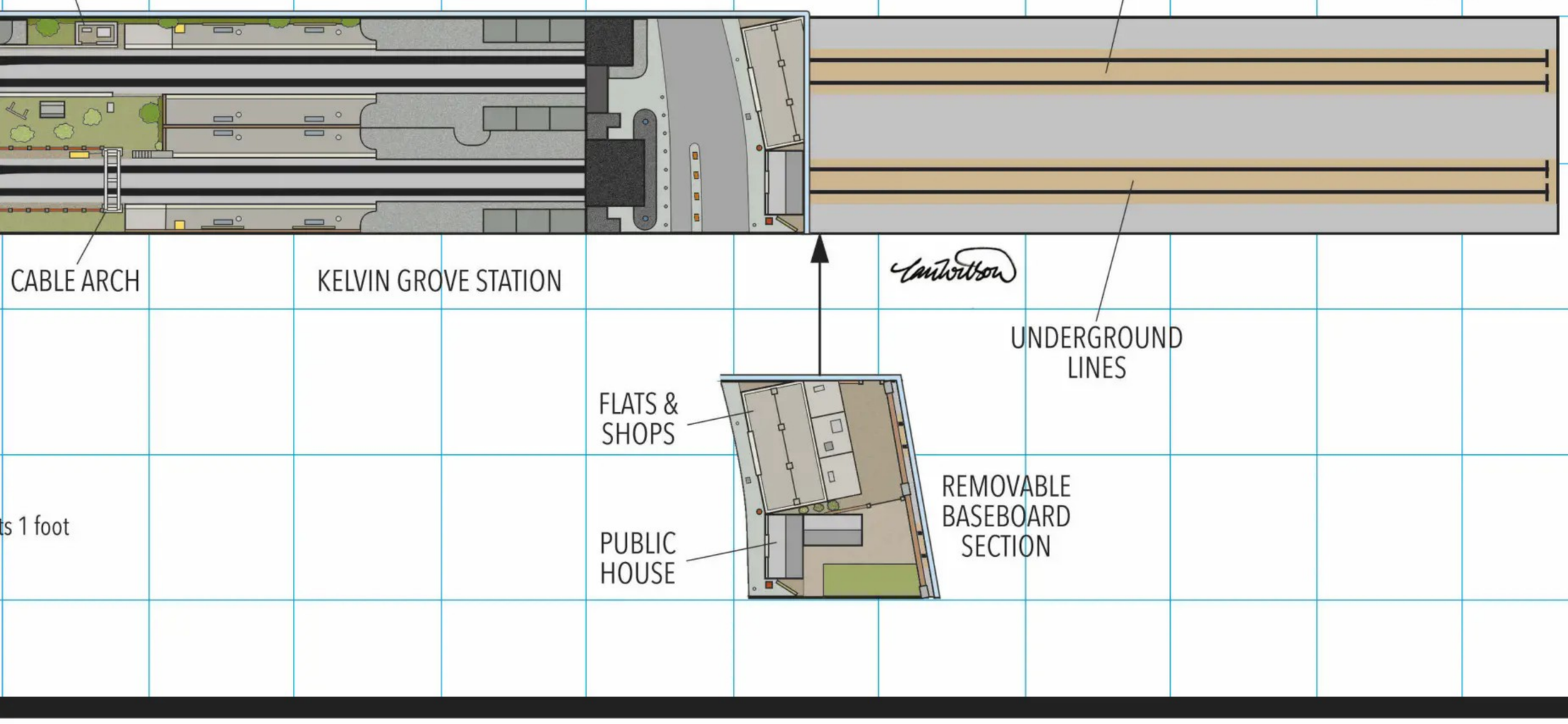
Corby and District Model Railway Society

The members involved with the layout have decades of modelling experience and the layout was worked on at the Society Headquarters' site, Kelvin Grove, Corby.

The members have constructed a number of previous layouts of many gauges, either for the Society or their own creations, with two of the team appearing on TV in *The Great Model Railway Challenge* in 2019.

We are all interested in railways in general, not just the UK, with the Society also owning a full-size train (Class 144 car!). It also operates a miniature railway within its grounds and has a mobile set-up that goes out to events, which we all lend a hand on running days and public events. Some of the team involved own 5-inch gauge locomotives! So it's not just about the modelling!

ABOVE: The Thompson Street end of the layout with its camera monitor above the backscene, giving live images of what's going on underground.



ABOVE: A busy crossing in Thompson Street as traffic stops to let people cross. The alarm at the bank has gone off, with the robber outside making off with the swag.

MIDDLE RIGHT: A bus stops to collect its passengers as the bridal party has their pictures taken as they leave the church.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Across the street from the Regal theatre, the air vent from the underground tunnel network below can be found. Now on tea bags, as the strainer has gone missing?

The existing overground station was also removed and platforms stripped; again, with research carried out on a suitable replacement. Charles Holden was so influential in the expansion of the underground into suburbia and its architecture. An art deco station design was decided for both the underground and overground lines. A Kingsway card kit (Rayners Lane) was a starting point. Everything again was scratch-built using brick paper and card with full detailed interiors, including stairwells and platform buildings, with the addition of station signage, platform lighting and furnished with items found on these type of stations, with pictorial evidence sourced from the internet. This station took the name Kelvin Grove after the street in Corby where the Society can be found.

The street scene at this end of the layout had lit vehicles depicting a red route with shops/flats and public house, which again started life as Kingsway kits, heavily changed.

A total rewire was undertaken with a control box made with 3v, 6v, 9v and 12v outputs to power all the different lighting and power requirements. The layout is controlled by four

single analogue controllers, but can be switched to DCC if needed. This gives us greater scope and realism (sound) when operating.

Currently, at various points along the underground lines, rail flashes are depicted when rolling stock shoes make contact with 3rd and 4th conductor rails. This is achieved by 1mm LEDs, a reed switch and a magnet stuck at the right point on the underside of the train car.

Exhibition ready

Remarkably, we achieved our goal and exhibited 'Kelvin Grove/Thompson Street' as planned within the eight weeks. Additional work has been carried out from that point, so please look out for new projects being completed.

This end-to-end layout has many operational challenges! With its line being over 80% scenic, and 50% plus under various structures, the operators could do with a bit of help. This is achieved by the use of a camera system. Sourced from the internet, a number of 12v car camera systems have been installed along with monitors, which gives us as operators a chance and also allows the viewing public to see the trains in a subterranean setting.

TOP LEFT: A couple takes a break on the park bench with others sitting in the shade under the parasols after getting some refreshments from the pavilion.

MIDDLE LEFT: Looks like there could be a "beerfest" on shortly at The Old Kings Head. Bunting has gone up and the brewery delivery has just arrived.

BELOW: Crompton Class 33/1 No. D6511 and 4-TC Set No. 415 in BR Blue is seen heading west, passing the CDMRS advertising board, on a Weymouth service.

"...Charles Holden was so influential in the expansion of the underground into suburbia and its architecture."

ABOVE: SR Green unit 2-HIL Set No. 2611 (consisting 2-HAL DMBT 10729 and 2-BIL DTCL 12146) slows down as it passes the box heading into Kelvin Grove station, eastbound towards London.

TOP RIGHT: 66769 *Prostate Cancer UK* heads west on an engineer's train consisting of lowmac, 12t YOB crane and salmon wagons.

BOTTOM RIGHT: SR Pullman-liveried Class 73 No. 73101 *Brighton Evening Argus* leaves Kelvin Grove, passing the engineering train of track panels for a local engineering possession.

Track cleaning could pose a problem but this was achieved by ensuring track scenery, stations and other structures can easily be removed. The 3rd and 4th rail has also been secured (glued) onto the sleepers without the insulators. This gives a fair depiction, though not necessarily an accurate one! However, the rail heads are level and makes this process easier and also avoids any additional issues when transporting the layout to exhibitions.

We have been overwhelmed by the feedback we have received at exhibitions and, in particular, how we have achieved our depiction of the underground and overground network. Pleasing are the comments made on how you can see into the structures, which from the outset was "how could we achieve this?". It was our intention not to hide anything.

'Kelvin Grove/Thompson Street' does not run to any timetable. The Society members have a variety of rolling stock covering the era and this is complemented by Society-owned and donated items. This includes underground varieties.

TOP RIGHT: Thompson Street station is busy with an S stock service waiting to leave for London.

MIDDLE RIGHT: A cat keeps an eye on the traffic travelling on Kelvin Grove (red route) passing the model shop, Wimpey and undertakers. Hopefully, no one is speeding.

BELOW: Network Southeast-liveried 33035 passes Kelvin Grove box heading westbound on the weekly nuclear flask train made up of PNA and two flask wagons.

Final thoughts

'Kelvin Grove/Thompson Street' is very much a work in progress. The Society members' plan is to make additional baseboards, turning the track at the 'Kelvin Grove' end through a full 180 degrees (full scenic), along with boards returning back to enable a cassette system to be implemented, allowing quicker exchanges of rolling stock. The over-track Kelvin Grove street scene (flats, shops and public house) section is separately removable (dowelled), meaning this can be interchanged between the existing fiddle yard baseboard and the proposed curved one giving scenic continuity. This will allow a number of operating lengths/footprints and options for exhibition managers to ponder over.

Signalling has started to be installed with under-baseboard wiring and control system still to be completed. This will add additional detail and interest to the layout. ■

See 'Kelvin Grove' in action at
NOVEMBER 22 & 23, 2025
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COMMUNITY

EDITOR'S COMMENT

At the time of writing, we are only five weeks away from The National Festival of Railway Modelling, our biggest show of the year - in fact, it's the largest model railway show in the UK. Last year was a great success, both in terms of the number of visitors through the door and their overall enjoyment. The feedback we received from visitors was fantastic.

A glowing review is great, but with that comes a certain amount of pressure to make year two even better! We've certainly been working hard behind the scenes to deliver a show for all, especially youngsters, the future generation of the hobby, who we all have a responsibility to encourage as much as possible. A free ride-on train, games, hands-on modelling and competitions are just some of the features we've got lined up this year. New for 2025 is the World of Railways Stage, which includes panel discussions and Q&As with well-known names in the hobby, plus some modelling advice and practical demonstrations from our BRM contributors – all included in your ticket price. Let us also not forget one of the big reasons we go to shows; there will be over 60 high-quality layouts in attendance, three of which are featured in this issue of BRM.

If you are still on the fence about whether to book your ticket or not, just remember that booking in advance means you save money from the on-the-door price, plus we are currently offering a discounted rate on car parking, which we know is somewhat expensive at the NEC (and outside of our control, unfortunately).

Don't want to take our word for it? Have a look on YouTube, there are loads of great videos from people who attended last year.

Hopefully, we will see you at The NEC this November 22nd- 23rd, but in the meantime, enjoy the magazine.

Debbie Wood

DELTIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY SUFFER BREAK IN

Among the goods stolen were a number of limited-edition Accurascale Class 55 D9015.

The modelling community is being asked to keep an eye out for any of these models of *Tulyar,* as they were only available direct from the charity, which uses the income from selling products like these to keep its Deltics running.

Please provide any information or possible sightings on the models directly to the society.

WEEKEND PLANS...

High Wycombe MRX25 autumn exhibition

To support Railway 200, The High Wycombe and District Model Railway Society will host two shows this year. This second show, Wycombe MRX25 Autumn exhibition, will feature 11 high-quality layouts, plus a number of trade stands and societies and will be held at the Cressex Community Centre & Social Club in High Wycombe.
DATE: Saturday, November 15th, 2025

Portsmouth Model Railway Exhibition

The South Hants Model Railway Club will host its annual Portsmouth Model Railway Exhibition at Admiral Lord Nelson School in Portsmouth. Showcasing over 10 layouts and a number of trade stands and societies, entry costs £8, with accompanying children free.
DATE: Saturday, November 15th, 2025

Falkirk Model Railway Exhibition

Falkirk Model Railway Club has a new venue for its annual show, which will now be hosted at Forth Valley College in Falkirk. Featuring over 20 layouts and a mix of over 20 quality trade and society stands, adult entry costs £10 and includes a full colour programme and entry to a raffle.
DATE: November 15-16th, 2025

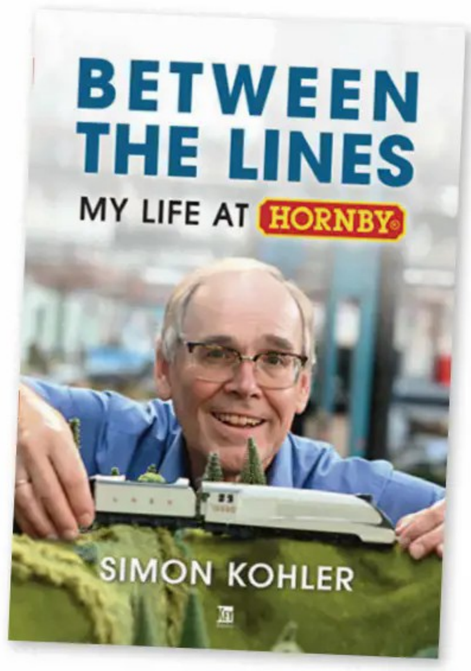
Brighton Model Railway Exhibition

This weekend event in 'London-by-the-Sea' is in its 45th year and will be held at Patcham Community Centre in Brighton. Visitors can expect nine layouts and a number of traders and societies in attendance. Entry costs £5 and it's free to park.
DATE: November 15-16th, 2025

The National Festival of Railway Modelling

Britain's biggest model railway show is back for its second year, held at the iconic National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Visitors can expect to see over 60 fantastic layouts, over 100 traders and societies, plus numerous family attractions! Save money by booking in advance at www.nfrm.co.uk.
DATE: November 22-23rd, 2025

BEHIND THE SCENES AT HORNBY



A familiar face to many in the world of model railways, Simon Kohler has released a memoir offering a personal perspective on his long career with Hornby — one of Britain's most recognisable names in the hobby.

Titled *Between the Lines – My Life at Hornby*, the book covers Kohler's time with the company from the 1970s through to the 21st century. During this period, he worked across various roles, becoming a well-known figure among modellers, retailers and within the wider model railway community.

RRP: £34.99

MURAL UNVEILED TO CELEBRATE S&DR200 BICENTENARY

Darlington Borough Council has joined forces with the Arthur Warton Foundation to unveil a striking new mural that celebrates both the town's pivotal role in global history and the achievements of the world's first black professional footballer.

Commissioned by the Arthur Wharton Foundation and funded through Darlington Borough Council's Creative Darlington project, the mural is titled, *We Changed the World from Here*, and was created by Dan Walls (Illumination Wall Art).

The artwork, unveiled during the S&DR200 festival year, also marks the bicentenary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. It depicts the Skerne Bridge, the world's oldest working railway bridge, which appeared on the £5 note, alongside George Stephenson and *Locomotion No. 1*.

The mural also pays tribute to Arthur Wharton, born in Ghana and who became a goalkeeper for Darlington F.C. in the 1880s, making him the first black professional footballer.

WINDING DOWN

The Medway Queen "Wagon Project" started in 2003, and in the last 22 years has exceeded its aims to raise awareness and funds for this historic ship's continuing restoration.

However, the success of the wagons was largely due to Medway Queen's Reading Support Group attending model railway exhibitions with the wagons and other relevant sales items. The entirely voluntary group started in 1997 and, although it represented *Medway Queen* at events, it was funded independently of the Medway Queen Preservation Society (registered charity 296236). It has raised funds in excess of £120,000 for that heritage charity! All good things come to an end, however, and 2024 was the group's last exhibition season. Bluntly, we were all getting too old, and we have now completed that process!

The loss of exhibition sales stands has had a serious impact on the viability of the "Wagon Project". The focus has become the society's base at Gillingham Pier and the Medway Queen website. The website shop has been redeveloped in recent months, and the remaining wagons can now be ordered directly via that site and at a modest discount to clear remaining stock. For OO, we still have the *Ailsa* 7-plank wagons, celebrating the ship's centenary, and for N gauge, there are 20T mineral wagons liveried for *Ailsa* and for the *General Steam Navigation Co.* All are based on Dapol models. All earlier models are now sold out, but you might find second-hand ones elsewhere if you are lucky.

We have received tremendous support from enthusiasts and event organisers in the model railway hobby over the years, for which we offer grateful thanks, and hope very much that this support can continue after the transition to Gillingham. There is an advantage - you'll be able to buy your wagons and visit this historic paddle steamer at the same time!

Richard Halton

EAST COAST DRAGS

Having read the interesting feature by Andrew K Overton on 'East Coast drags' in the November issue of Traction, I'd like to add a little information on one of the workings shown within. I was the driver for 1D19, the 15.05 Kings Cross to Leeds with top and tailed Class 67s. It was a pleasant surprise for me when I booked on that day, March 6th, to discover what my motive power was. At that time (2018), it would usually be Class 91s or Class 90s (which I preferred).

As Andrew mentioned, the down working arrived at Leeds, not surprisingly, 43 minutes late. It was on the return working, 1A48, with 67 005 leading, that things started to happen. Firstly, on the approach to Doncaster, a fault light came up with power still available. Having contacted control, it was decided to carry on using reduced power. However, when I was about five minutes away from Retford (which I don't think was a booked stop), the engine shut down, with a "hot engine" fault light illuminated. I contacted the signaller and requested the train be routed into Retford station, the platform being on a loop line away from the main line. They agreed to this, and 1A48 was terminated there. It turned out that the engine coolant storage tank on 67 005 had been holed, and a complete loss of coolant resulted. With everyone de-trained, I worked the empty stock back to Doncaster. So it was fortunate that I had a loco on both ends! The 15.05 Kings Cross to Leeds can be seen on YouTube, arriving at Peterborough and departing from Doncaster. It is titled *67 012 TnT with 67 005 working Kings Cross-Leeds 06/03/18*.

Gary Harn

A BIG BIRTHDAY!

The Leicester Model Railway Group presented our president, Tony Shuttlewood, a model of a Class 90 electric locomotive on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Pictured is chairman, Peter Nicholson, watching Tony cutting the birthday cake. A milestone event in any modeller's life.

Brian Gillespie

FAR TERMINUS

The latest immersive tabletop layout from David Wright features another composition of the Ashover Light Railway, this time modelling the railway that went to 'Where the Rainbow Ends'.

Words: David Wright **Photography:** Phil Parker

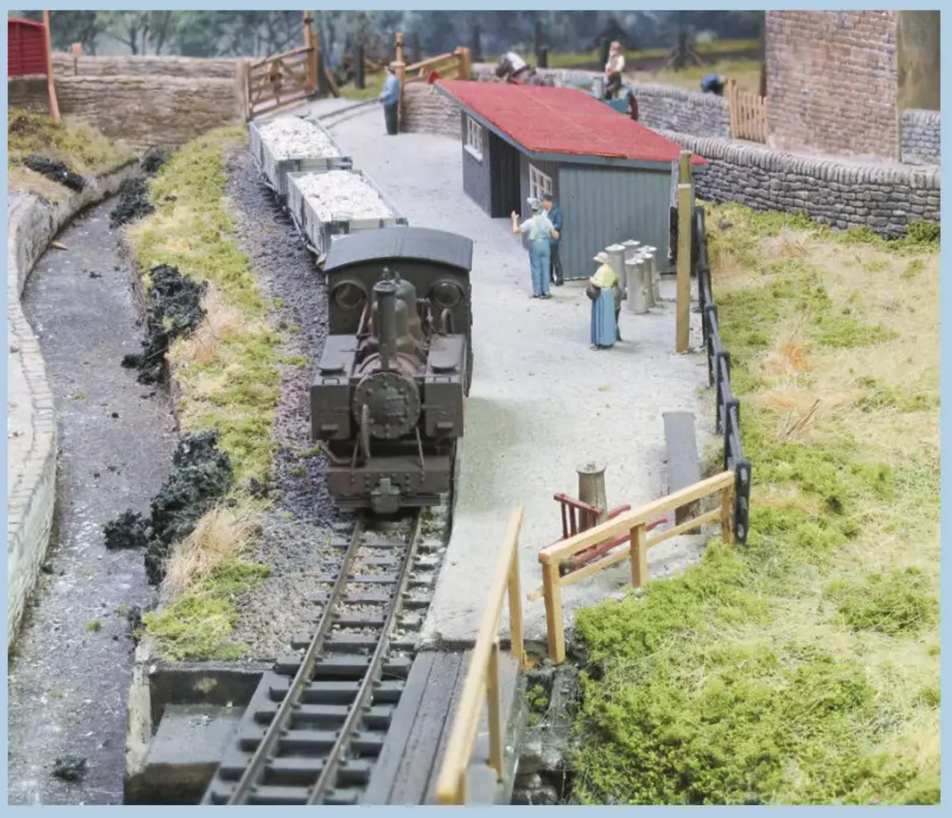
FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Ashover Butts
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft scale/9mm gauge/009
SIZE: 4ft x 2ft 6 inches
ERA/REGION: 1925-1950/Derbyshire
LAYOUT TYPE: Tabletop/continuous run

Peggy poses with a box van alongside the platform at Ashover Butts. The van has been specially produced as a limited edition for the railway's Centenary. It has been decorated with both the dates and the monogram of The Ashover Light Railway Society.

TOP RIGHT:
Hummy runs through the station with a train of limestone. The Marsh Brook can be seen running parallel to the railway.

MIDDLE RIGHT:
Hummy is pictured here crossing over Ashover Road, while a local farmer has just dropped off a few churns of milk ready for collection by the next train.



BELOW:
Peggy departs Ashover Butts and is about to cross the bridge over the Marsh Brook. The brook is a tributary of the river Amber. The A.L.R. would follow the course of the river a good number of miles before turning east and then north to reach its destination at Clay Cross.

Readers of BRM may recall my layout 'Fall Mill', which featured in the March 2022 issue. This layout has now moved on to a new owner, although the stock still remained for me to plan another model. This time, I chose to try and recreate the far terminus of the line at 'Ashover Butts.' This also gave me a deadline to aim at, this being to complete the layout to coincide with the railway's centenary on the 6th of April this year.

A short history

The railway opened in 1925 and lasted until 1950, built for the purpose of carrying limestone and Fluorspar from quarries located on the Overton Estates. These lay close to the North Derbyshire village of Ashover. The minerals would be used for the production of iron in the Clay Cross Company Works, and therefore, the line would be only just over seven miles in length.

For the line to be granted a Light Railway Order, an arrangement was made for the company to provide a passenger service as well. All the locomotives and stock, including the track, were purchased from the War Department, which had seen original service during the First World War. The passenger stock, however, had to be purchased new for use on the line. Four coaches were commissioned from The Gloucester Carriage and Wagon Company, although even these had bogies fitted from old War Department wagons. Besides the Gloucester coaches, a number of coaches were purchased from The Wembley Never Stop Railway after use at the Wembley Exhibition of 1924.

> "I always prefer a cloudy sky, which, in my opinion, gives the final presentation more depth and interest to the viewer."

The railway boasted of providing a service to take the workers' families of the iron works. Summer weekends and bank holidays often saw special trips out of the industrial grime and into a rural setting of Ashover. At the Butts terminus, an ice cream hut was provided along with the chance to paddle in the clear waters of the River Amber. At the same location, a café was built to an octagonal-shaped footprint with roof tiles consisting of the seven colours of the rainbow. The café was given the storybook name of 'WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS'.

Research begins

Planning the layout started with a visit to what was left of the site of the station and the surrounding area. Photographs were taken and a few measurements made of what survived, although you have to search and have a good eye for where the railway would have been. The Marsh Brook is still there, of course, although this is now much overgrown. The stone walls and Marsh Brook Cottage still exist; however, the latter has now been modernised and extended to twice the size of the original. Further along Ashover Lane is the Butts Chapel, now converted into a private dwelling.

Using the up-to-date photographs along with period photographs and acquiring a large-scale OS map, again from the correct period, a start could be made. The next stage was to create a scale plan from all this information, taking into consideration the format of the layout, which needed to be a continuous run circuit and the overall size needed to be only 4 ft x 2 ft 6 inches. With these parameters, a few rough sketches were made before working into the final plan.

ABOVE: A typical arrangement was for the locomotive to be seen pushing a wagon loaded with coal. *Hummy* is depicted here with a loaded wagon being delivered to the Butts siding. The coal would then be distributed to the homes and farms within and around Ashover village.

MIDDLE LEFT: The stone-built barn is not actually sited at the prototype location, but very typical of the area. Note the buttresses to support the building sitting on marshy ground, which slopes down towards the brook.

BOTTOM LEFT: The gatekeeper closes the road off to any traffic, while the farmer's horse and cart await patiently for the approaching train.

TOP RIGHT: Moving on from the last image, *Peggy* has now come into view, propelling a single Gloucester coach. In the background, a cameo scene shows a wife supervising her husband in the process of digging out the cabbages.

MIDDLE RIGHT: *Hummy* is seen rounding the curve and crossing over the Marsh Brook before delivering the wagon loaded with coal into the Butts siding. The brook joins with the river Amber just beyond the bridge. At this location, a line ran off to form one side of a triangle and continued on to Butts Quarry.

Laying foundations

9mm Plywood was used to construct both the surface and framework for the baseboard. The frame was made extra deep to a depth of 9 inches, which would give a better viewing height when positioned on a standard table. I purposely cut out recesses in the front and rear panels, together with round holes on both end panels. This was to reduce weight and provide easier handling when carrying the layout into and out of exhibition halls, as well as Derek's van.

The same ply was used for the surface board, although the track and other features would be on a higher plane. Only the bed of the brook would be on the surface level. The trackbed itself would be accommodated on some heavy-duty cardboard packaging material with cardboard honeycomb filler between two surface sheets. This, I found, was ideal, being both strong in construction and reasonably light. The material was also very easy to cut to shape to follow the trackbed. This was glued down along with larger sections to fill in various areas, which were also at track level.

The banks of the brook were constructed from laminate flooring underlay fibre board. By breaking the edge to reveal the fibres, a good representation of the banks can be achieved. This was immediately coated with a mix of PVA and plaster to give a more authentic finish and secure the fibres.

A closer image featuring *Peggy* sporting its attractive lined-out crimson livery. The single Gloucester coach is also wearing a similar livery lined out in gold. In the background, one of the sheep in the pasture is tending to her lamb.

A loaded train of limestone is seen entering the station. In this eye-level view, the walled-in Marsh Brook is clearly visible. The workers on the platform are engaged in conversation while the mother and child await the next passenger service.

The next stage was to fabricate the road running slightly uphill from track level at the crossing to where it visually disappeared at the rear of the layout. I used canvas board cut to size from sheets acquired at the 'WORKS'. This was supported on a series of balsa wood risers graduating in height. Once this was glued and secured in place, the higher ground could be built running up to it. At the same time, the higher land on the right-hand side and up to the rear was constructed. Cardboard profiles were cut to the shape of the contours and fixed into position. I made up the land form from a matrix of card strips cut from cereal packets. This was woven to give a strong but light support, following the contours of the raised land. To this, a topping of plaster bandage strips was added, with a topping of the PVA and plaster mix to give a hard shell finish.

Track laying could now be started using a combination of Peco 009 flexi track with Set Track on the tight curves. This was first fixed with pins directly onto the upper surface of the cardboard before glue was added to secure. Only one point was needed at the front visual part of the layout, which would give access to the coal road. I constructed a wooden shelf at the rear of the layout to a width of about 4 inches; this would accommodate the passing and storage loop and was laid using Peco N Set Track, with left and right-hand medium turnouts used.

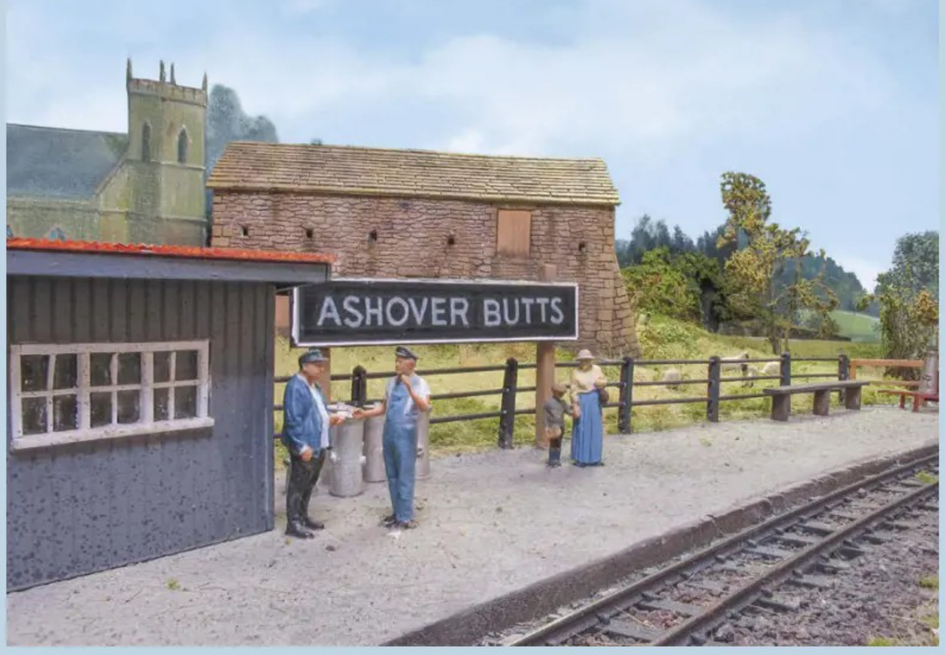
MIDDLE LEFT:
Another cameo scene shows a milk churn waiting to be loaded on the next train. The buttresses are seen supporting the gable end of the barn, hopefully stopping the building from slipping towards the brook. In the background, the spire of Ashover All Saints Parish church is clearly seen.

BOTTOM LEFT:
Peggy calls at the station running north this time. This wide view shows the Butts Chapel standing just beyond the barn. This, of course, is two-dimensional, painted onto the backscene. In the foreground, the sides are dropped on the ex-WD (D class) wagon for offloading stone.

TOP RIGHT: In this image of the level crossing, the farmer's horse and cart is still waiting for the train's arrival. This low-angle view shows Butts Road heading towards the Butts Chapel in the mid-distance.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Staff and passengers stand under the running in board for 'Ashover Butts', awaiting the arrival of the next train towards Clay Cross.

BELOW: *Hummy* again passes through the station with another loaded train of stone. The hand-painted backscene depicts the local landscape of the northern Amber Valley.



Scenic features

I used the finest-grained ballast I could lay my hands on, replicating the ash used on the prototype. This was applied in the usual method of scattering and brushing the grains into position, before wetting with a garden mister and adding diluted PVA with an eye dropper. The ballast was then painted straight away using a wash of Paynes Gray oil paint.

The next stage was to paint the white surface of the land form using a mix of Paynes Gray and Yellow Ochre to give a deep earthy colour ready to add the static grass and scatter. The road surface was applied using a thin coat of DAS and a low platform added, made from a thin sheet of Styrofoam. This was also coated by brushing a thin mix of PVA and plaster to give a representation of the textured surface of the prototype.

Scenic work was now concentrated on creating the brook. The banks had already been fixed, coated and painted at the same time as painting the rest of the land form and the river bed. I started by gluing in a few rocks using grey cat litter before brushing over with three coats of gloss clear picture varnish. On the last coat, I used a stippling technique with the brush to recreate a rippling on the surface. Also, at the same time, any white water was added by brushing into the varnish using white oil paint. I find using this technique gives a realistic replication of the water breaking both at the surface and those bubbles you see just under the surface.

> "The station building was constructed from styrene sheet, with vertical planking chosen to match those seen on the photographs of the prototype."

ABOVE Pictured is a close-up of the upper Marsh Brook Cottage with its outside toilet facilities alongside the coal house. Also worth noting is the pigsty and cabbage patch.

ABOVE This view shows a couple of locals in conversation while waiting for the train to take them into Clay Cross.

Trees were fabricated from selected natural roots with more branches as foliage added using products from the Woodland Scenics range. Most of these were placed along the banks of Marsh Brook, where alder trees are prominent. Also, the marginal plants were added along the banks using various scatter material and some old carpet underlay foam that had well-perished. Most of the grassland was rough pasture, and I managed to replicate this using various tones of green and straw-coloured static grass. Different lengths were selected and all were applied into a bed of PVA glue.

The brambles and other bushes were added using rubberised horsehair sprinkled with fine foam flock. Thicker vegetation was placed and glued into position towards the rear of the layout, so this would blend nicely with the backscene.

Key structures

The model features two stone buildings, the first being 'Upper Marsh Brook Cottage'. Although this has been extended and modernised considerably today, there was still enough left to give reference for building a model of it. Measurements were estimated as it was not practical to go measure the cottage on site.

All the walls, window and door apertures were marked up to scale on a good quality card before being cut out. The card shell of the building was then assembled, adding 4mm square balsa strip for the corner bracing.

The Backscene

I always paint my backscenes onto sheets of canvas board, which can be readily obtained from craft suppliers. The boards are pretty rigid, however, I tend to add a light wooden frame to the rear. Painting always begins by creating the sky, which is easily produced using a small range of 'Halfords' spray paints. Readers who are familiar with my layouts will observe that I like to stay clear of plain blue skies. I will always prefer to paint a cloudy sky, which, in my opinion, gives the final presentation more depth and interest to the viewer.

I start the landscape by painting in the skyline using a mix of a small amount of Ultramarine Blue with Paynes Gray and Titanium White to give a light slate grey colour. This will represent the far distance, which seems to resemble a monotone in real life. This is brushed on using acrylic paint with a rough edge applied on the horizon. Trees in the distance were also painted in using a stipple technique with a 6mm filbert brush using the same mix. The mid ground was painted next, using a mix with less white to give a darker shade. This process was repeated again with the foreground, basically making each stage darker as we come forward.

Once this layering had been completed, the highlighting was started. First, deciding the direction of the light as only one side of the fields and trees would catch the light and the other side would be in shadow. Butts Chapel is an important feature to the model, however, there simply was not enough space to create a 3D model or even modelling it in half relief, therefore, it would have to be painted in 2D onto the backscene. Working from photographs that were taken on site, it was first pencilled in, making sure that it was to scale and the perspective looked correct from different viewpoints. Once satisfied, I could continue by first blocking all the structure in with a neutral grey-coloured paint. Next, the highlights were painted, remembering which direction the light was coming from, before adding in the windows, etc. The windows were painted in a dark grey with highlights picked out where the light was seen to be reflecting off the glass panes.

This more or less completes describing how I painted the backscene. I always try to keep the backscene as simple as possible, but at the same time try and give a good representation of the landscape beyond the model. The trick is to continue the illusion in 2D as a continuation of what is modelled in 3D sitting immediately in front of it. By using subtle colours and less detail, but adding light and shadow in the right places, a reasonable and more convincing result can be achieved.

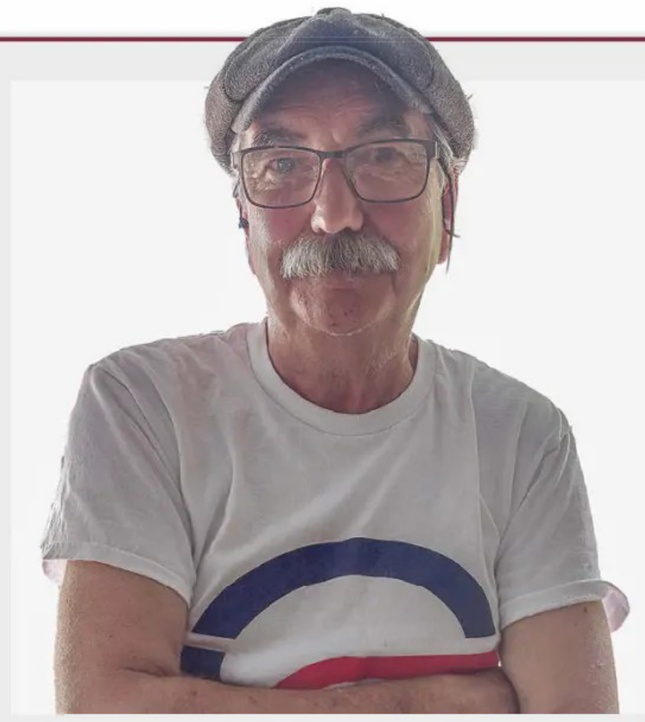
The next stage was to cover the facing side with a thin skin of DAS modelling clay. This was smeared onto a coating of PVA that had been brushed on first. By wetting your fingers, the clay can be worked to give a thin coating. The model was left overnight before scribing out the stone masonry, matching the coursing of the prototype as closely as possible.

Before adding the windows, doors and roof, I always paint the masonry first, again to match the provided photographic reference. My painting method uses artists' oil paints as these react perfectly with the clay, and it allows for convincing blending of colour and shade. The paint is first applied as a wash, which gives an overall background colour and creates the mortar or gaps between the stones. After this, it's a case of building up the facing colours and shades by dry-brushing them over the surface.

The next stage was to add the windows and the doors. The windows were made from cutting the frames from thin card, with adhesive film added first. The card was spray-painted before being cut out using a buff colour. The cut frames were then fixed to the clear celluloid film. Glazing bars were made from thinly cut card, again with the adhesive film added before cutting. The bars were then fixed in position to make up both the six and four-pane frames. The planked doors were made from scoring the planking onto a piece of thin card, which was painted with the same buff colour used for the window frames. The frame to both doors was made up using thin strips of card. To finish, door furniture was added again using thin strips of card.

The roof was started using a piece of card measured to fit and folded. The slates covering the roof were marked out first to about 4mm wide and around 6mm in depth, with 2mm extra to provide the overlap. The slates were cut with a scalpel and the overlap cut all the way, creating a strip. This was repeated to create enough strips of slates to cover the area of the roof. Each strip was then glued into position, starting at the eaves and overlapping each row until reaching the ridge.

About the modeller



Name: David Wright
Age: 70
Number of years modelling: 35 years
Name of your first layout: 'Baslow'
Favourite era/region: Midlands/ LMS 1930s
Favourite locomotive: LMS Jubilee

My interest in model railways started at the age of six after my father took me to see the wonderful O gauge layout 'Kirtley', then housed in The Museum & Art Gallery in Derby.
Not long after, I received a Triang TT train set for Christmas, all mounted on a baseboard. I soon started to add buildings and, along with my father, created my first attempts at scenery. My interest dwindled through my teenage years as I pursued a career in graphic design; however, this was rekindled after a work colleague showed me his layout housed in the loft. Inspiration came rushing back, with my first attempt to build a layout in the garage. This was called 'Baslow', based on the Midland Railway in the Peak District. I turned to Great Western/Southern after a few visits to see Pendon. I was completely blown away by the standard of scenic modelling, and wanted to try something similar.

Over the last 15 years, I have been demonstrating my modelling techniques using card and DAS Modelling Clay, together with a display of model dioramas. Over the last five years, I have included a small tabletop layout to showcase some of my model buildings together with my hand-painted backdrops. With only limited space available, this gave birth to my 009 narrow gauge layouts appearing at exhibitions. I regularly work on the re-instated layout, now called 'Kirtley Junction' and housed in its own gallery in Derby's Museum of Making, the layout that had first inspired my interest in the hobby all those years ago.

ABOVE: *Peggy* heads a train in reverse over the level crossing towards Kelstedge with the Ashover Light Railway's Centenary box van in tow.

Painting the roof slates started with an overall coat of dark grey. This was applied using Humbrol Matt Tank Grey from a spray can after masking the walls, etc. Lighter and darker shades of grey were brush-painted, picking them out, before blending the shades together. Weathering would complete the roof in the form of rain streaking and finally lichen growth. The former was created using a finger to drag the paint down in a straight line, and the latter stippling ochre paint using a brush with cut-down bristles.

The largest structure to feature on the layout is the barn. This, however, is not to be found at the exact location, but was added to give more visual interest. It is a familiar Derbyshire field barn constructed from the local stone. The model was built in exactly the same way as the cottage, although the roof on the prototype was covered with stone flags rather than slate. This was replicated on the model by cutting them slightly larger than the slates; these were painted in the same shades to match the sandstone walls.

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TOP RIGHT: This picture shows another close-up view of the platform with passengers standing under the Ashover Butts running in board, as *Hummy* encroaches into the scene.

MIDDLE RIGHT: A view looking down Butts Road towards the level crossing with the Upper Marsh Brook Cottage on the right. *Hummy* is seen running over the crossing towards Kelstedge. The large sign in the distance is for the octagonal-shaped café 'Where the Rainbow Ends'.

The station building was constructed from styrene sheet, with vertical planking chosen to match those seen on the photographs of the prototype. The windows were fabricated from styrene strip and left unpainted. Styrene sheet was used for the roof, replicating the corrugated iron panels. The vertical boarding was painted in the grey used for all the railway buildings by the Clay Cross Company. The roofing panels were first painted using red oxide straight from a Halfords spray can. To finish, the roof was weathered using lighter shades of orange, replicating the rusting. Finally, rain streaking was added in the usual way, which has already been explained.

The pigsty was made in a similar way to the station building; however, cut-down coffee stirrers were used rather than the styrene sheet. The roof was made again with panels of the styrene, which was also used to create most of the sty's pen. Cut down coffee stirrers and matchsticks made up all the upright posts and the gate.

The final structures worth mentioning are the stone walls and the gates. The former were made from strips of cardboard with a skin of DAS modelling clay added. The stone was scribed with the top copings all carved into the DAS. The small bridge spanning the Marsh Brook was also made from cardboard, finished in the same way as the walling.

> "I find using this technique gives a realistic replication of the water breaking both at the surface and those bubbles you see just under the surface."

An interesting close-up shows *Hummy* shunting a loaded wagon of coal into the Butts siding. This overall view also shows the full scene of the left-hand side of the layout and depicts the idyllic rural setting of this wonderful little railway.

TOP RIGHT: *Hummy* again passes through the station with a train of limestone with the Marsh Brook running in front. Note how the course of the brook has been canalised or walled in at this point.

MIDDLE RIGHT: *Peggy* is seen rounding the curve about to cross Butts Road. Note how the train entering the scene is masked by strategically positioning bushes and trees. This has also been continued on the hand-painted backscene.

BELOW: The overall right-hand side of the model with *Hummy* propelling three loaded wagons over the Marsh Brook.

The layout features three gates, two of which make up those supplied for the level crossing. The third gate gave entrance to the coal yard. I managed to fabricate all the gates from strips of card. These were constructed over a master scale drawing, which replicated the two styles of gates. The drawing was then pasted onto a piece of foam board. Construction followed using the drawing as a guide and double-sided tape to hold the card strips in position. All the gates were spray-painted using a Humbrol Desert Sand colour.

Final thoughts

The layout has already been exhibited at the Centenary Exhibition in Ashover, where it was very well received, plus a number of model railway exhibitions, including two in Derbyshire at Bakewell and Buxton. It was also very well received at Stafford in September and will be appearing at The National Festival of Railway Modelling 2025 at the NEC this November.

I hope that by creating the model, it has brought more interest to the county's little railway in a very special year. ■

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Getting Practical with...

TOOL of the MONTH

PP3 battery

A 9v battery is always within easy reach of my modelling board. When I want to quickly test a locomotive, it's very handy. Those terminals are just the right distance apart from N, TT:120 and OO gauge wheels, and a quick burst of power proves the motor works. Even DCC locos can be tested this way unless CV29 isn't set to DC and DCC (thanks to John Gay for DCC advice). If you are out loco shopping on second-hand stalls, keep a battery in a plastic bag in your pocket!

Ask Phil

How do I avoid a gap under the edges of my buildings?

Nothing looks worse on a layout than buildings floating in mid-air. What you should do is extend the walls below ground level, but while that works at Pendon, it's impractical for most of us. Instead, when you glue the model down, put some weights on the roof to make it seat firmly in place. Then cover up any gaps with grass and weeds. For this, a puffer bottle grass applicator is the perfect, and cheap, tool.

New on the workbench

Coach & Wagon Works – Tidy Tin

The tops of my paint tins are always a mess. Every time I wipe excess paint off the brush, it dries on the tin lip and stops the top seating properly. Every so often, I clean the mess away with a knife, but it's not as good as a clean tin. A solution, at least for 50ml tinlets, is this Tidy Tin. The laser-cut plywood ring clips into the top of the tinlet, and any dribbles or mess attach to the wood, keeping the lip clean. For £3 a pop, you can bin them when they get too mucky. A 14ml tin version is in development. Visit **coachandwagonworks.uk** for more details.

Phil Parker

Michael Russell

Darius Aibara

Michael Campbell

Tony Wright

Build an N gauge parcels van

Is kit-building cheaper than RTR? It can be if you need a fleet of parcels or fish vans. RRP of the RTR Peco model is £11.85. The kit is £8. Add a sheet of transfers and a bit of paint, and over a typical train length, there is money to be saved on this simple build.

1 The kit is essentially an unassembled version of the RTR model, a quick, easy build with very few components. You can be confident of ending up with a wagon as good as a boxed, ready-assembled version.

2 I'm using a set of Railtec transfers that cover both parcels and fish stock. First though, a coat of Lifecolor Rail Blue, then the transfers are given a dip in water and slid onto the wagon side. A spray of matt varnish protects them.

3 The wheels are clipped in place, the steel weight glued to the floor, and couplings dropped in the pockets on the ends. These are retained by the body when it's fixed on top.

4 Ready for the layout, although a little weathering would be nice. You could build a fleet of these in a couple of evenings, even allowing time for the paint to dry.

Create a market scene

Michael Russell

MARKETS ARE a common sight in Britain and have been since before the railways came along. Despite the decline of the high street, they are still being built, for example, Darley Street in Bradford. Many are now indoors, in which case you are just modelling a building, but some overspill into the outdoors, giving you an excuse to add interest. They are a great opportunity to model people and social interaction and are sure to add interest if you include them. A wide variety of proprietary kits are available to model a market scene and here a cross selection are used to show what can be achieved with a little effort.

What has really helped with the realism of this scene is the astonishing accuracy of 3D-scanned and printed figures and animals. As long as they are painted well, they go a long way to making the scene look lifelike.

To avoid covering over the details, use paint thinned as though for airbrushing and add progressively darker and more diluted colours so that the latter washes run into the recesses. Use a small brush and don't overload it with paint as you will flood the figure. Flesh colours are hard to mix, so buy an off-the-shelf supply in several shades.

If you accidentally release the figure or animal from its base by cutting too many supports away, then stick it to a new one for painting purposes using a scrap piece of plastic card or failed 3D print.

WHAT YOU NEED

KS Laser Designs
Railway arches

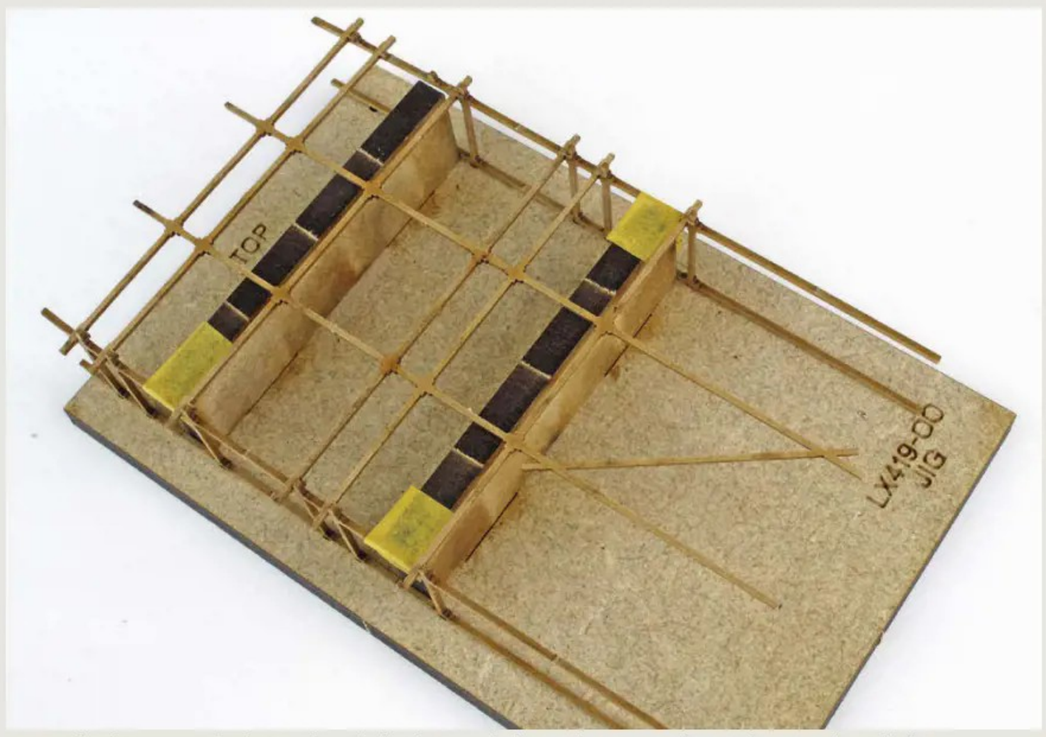
ModelU
31400-076 Seagulls (x12), 363-076 Market traders & 1362-076 Street Workers

Peco
Wills SS66 Small brick-built Public Toilets
SS37 Market Traders' Barrow Stalls

Scalemodelscenery
LX419-OO Scaffolding, LX015-OO Planters & Troughs

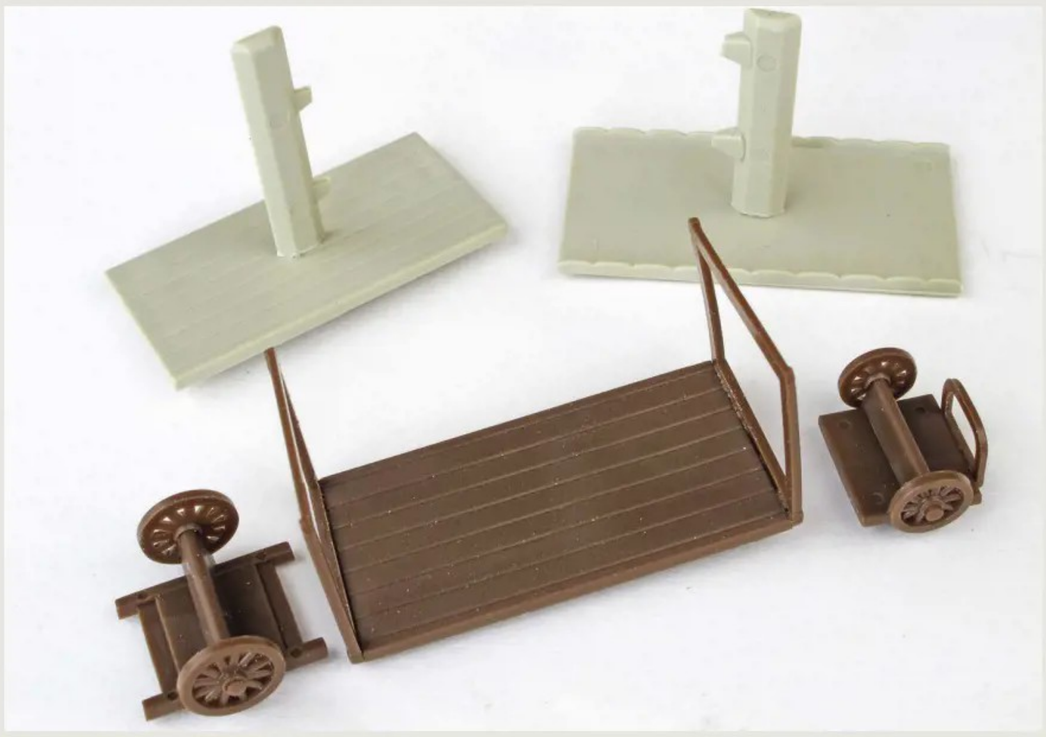
The Army Painter
Army Painter Quick Shade

Other
Air-drying clay, PVA glue, masking tape, grey aerosol paint, brown, grey, white, yellow, black, green, flesh acrylic paints, poly cement, brown-coloured pencils, acrylic thinners, Sett Pavement Textured rolling pin, small paintbrushes, toothbrush, scissors, side cutters, tweezers, rags, modelling knife.



1 It is useful to hold the side pieces in place inside the assembly jig with tape whilst fitting the front piece. Be careful with handling, as the item is fragile. A quick-setting PVA glue is best for this task.

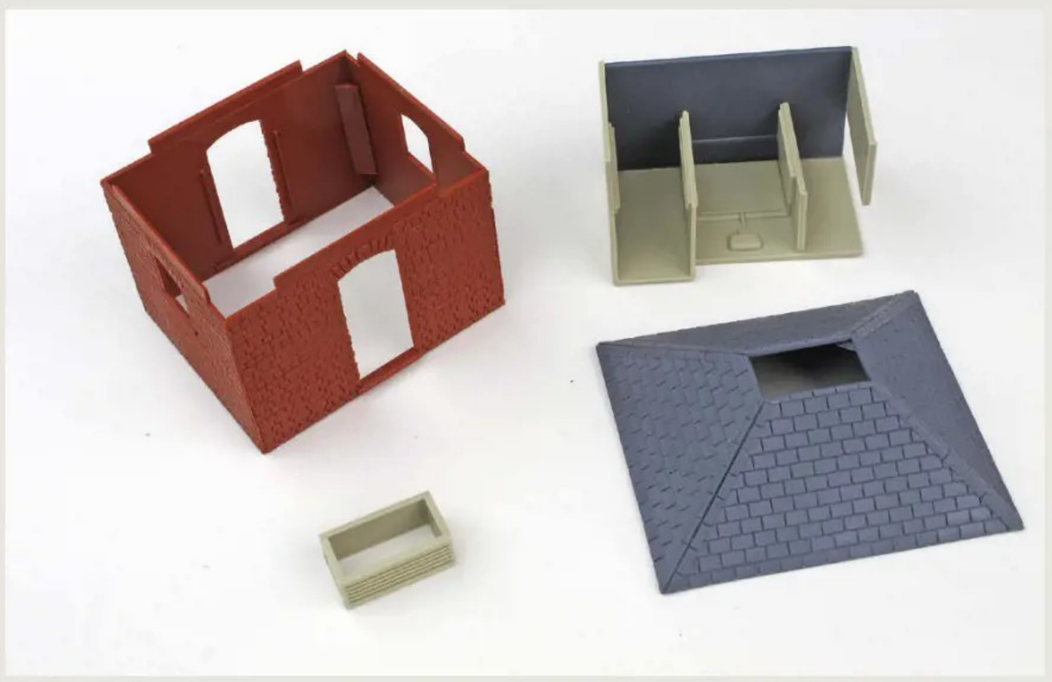
2 Spray the main frame once assembled and the other fittings before adding to the main structure. Weather the items separately beforehand. Dry-brush the planking with darker and lighter colours than the base coat.



3 Assemble the parts into sub-assemblies. Add handles from sections of runner where necessary, as this makes it much easier when painting and holding the parts safely when drying. Simply snap them off before assembly.

4 When painting the books on the barrow, it is better to paint the whole in a dark grey and wipe off the surplus on the tops with a cloth. When dry, paint individual spines and covers with any colours you like.

5 For the fruit and veg barrow, add various primary colours to your palette and continually mix these, with a little thinner, to achieve a wide range of different shades. When dry, add a coat of the Army Painter Quick Shade to add depth.



6 The toilet block should be assembled into the main parts; walls, roof, clerestory ventilators and the outside area. Paint the sub-assemblies and also the other parts that remain on their runners. During assembly, if the plastic is covered by paint, use superglue or even PVA instead of poly cement.

Getting Practical

7 The bricks are weathered by rubbing with lighter and darker shades of brown-coloured pencils. Dilute acrylic washes are used for other areas. The roofs have green and grey tones flicked at them using a toothbrush and then dry-brushed with an off-white.

8 The figures and animals need the supports generated for 3D printing to be snipped away. Use side cutters and tweezers for this, but be extremely careful that you only cut supports away and not part of the figure. Repair is possible with superglue, though.

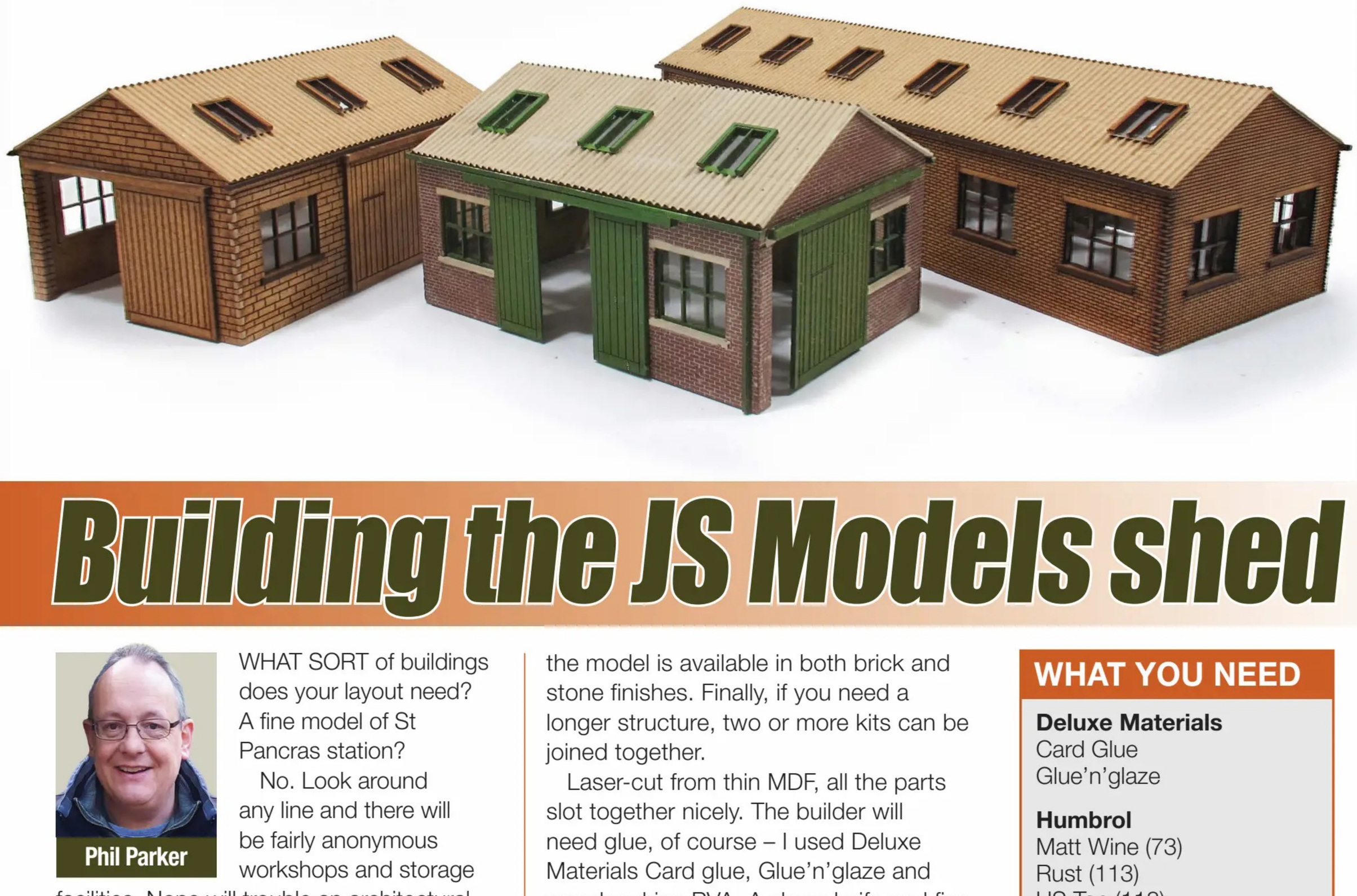
9 Paint the flesh areas first and, once dry, add some dark or soft tone Quickshade to add depth. Now paint the hair and then move onto the clothes. When all the colour has been added, dry-brush the entire model with an ivory colour to pick out the highlights.

10 Paint the seagulls white, then add grey and black and finally add the orange for the legs and bill. Add a small dot of black for the eye. You will need to remove them from the runner to paint some areas and to touch up.

11 The stone setts are made by rolling out a thin layer of air-drying clay in situ onto a thin coat of wet PVA. Use a GSW embossed rolling pin on the clay and roll from different angles to add interest - the areas between will look like drainage gullies. Press each building/backscene into the wet clay to allow it to seat better later.

12 Finally, when dry, paint the stone setts using a succession of thin acrylic colour washes, but let each layer dry thoroughly before adding the next. Greys and greens look best, and try to get a random effect - being too neat will lead to a contrived appearance.

BEGINNER



Building the JS Models shed

Phil Parker

WHAT SORT of buildings does your layout need? A fine model of St Pancras station?

No. Look around any line and there will be fairly anonymous workshops and storage facilities. None will trouble an architectural design competition, but they do provide a home for lots of businesses.

We've worked with JS Models to bring you a really useful building. In its basic form, the footprint is 11.5 by 8.5cm, with sliding doors on the long side and also on the ends, unless you prefer windows.

Flexibility is the key. Alternate ends are provided, two sets of windows and the model is available in both brick and stone finishes. Finally, if you need a longer structure, two or more kits can be joined together.

Laser-cut from thin MDF, all the parts slot together nicely. The builder will need glue, of course – I used Deluxe Materials Card glue, Glue'n'glaze and woodworking PVA. A sharp knife and fine sanding stick are the only tools required, although some little clips are very handy.

You'll also need paint, some DIY wall filler, and I'd recommend raiding the bathroom cabinet for talcum powder.

My build is as simple as can be, but this model offers so much potential for customisation, who knows how it could end up looking? It's your layout after all...

WHAT YOU NEED

Deluxe Materials
Card Glue
Glue'n'glaze

Humbrol
Matt Wine (73)
Rust (113)
US Tan (118)
Pale Stone (121)

World of Railways
Exclusive JS Models Shed

Other
Woodworking PVA, a sharp knife, fine sanding stick, little clips, paint, DIY wall filler, sponge and talcum powder.

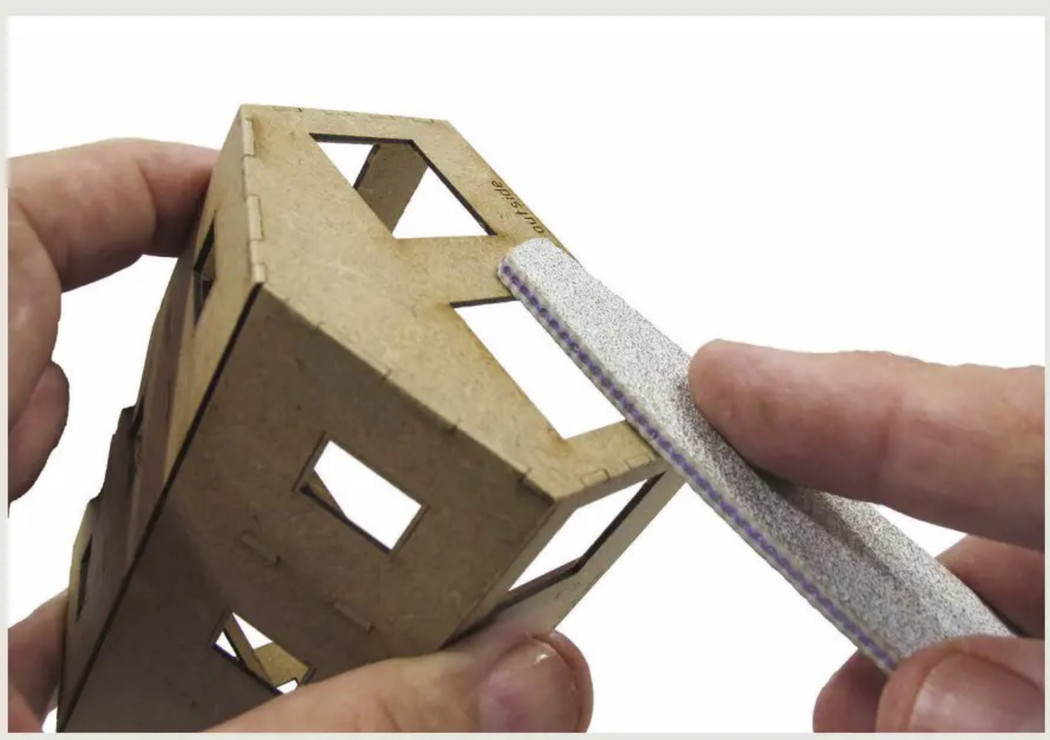
Getting Practical

1 Straight from the packet, we have a selection of laser-cut and etched MDF sheets. There are a lot of parts to choose from to allow for all the build options, so follow the instructions carefully.

2 The first instruction is to release the window from the inner wall pieces, which are identified by not having bricks etched on them; instead, there is the text “This face to the outside”.

3 Work starts by attaching the roof to the inner trusses. They will only fit one away around, and meet at the top, but it’s not obvious, so always carry out a dry, test fit first.

4 Walls are attached to the trusses and we build up the inner shell of the building. It’s at this point you start to decide the combination of walls and doors you want.



5 Due to variations in the thickness of the MDF, the tabs on the corners can be very slightly proud by about a quarter of a millimetre. Sand these back so they are flush with the surface.

6 Fit the first brick face with slow-setting PVA to allow for adjustment. Look carefully at this photo for the alignment; the inner bricks should line up with the side, leaving the others proud.

7 Once all the sides are in place, I randomly dab Humbrol Matt Wine (73), Rust (113) and US Tan (118) on the brick faces with pieces of sponge, working quickly so the colours blend.

8 Let the paint dry thoroughly and then add mortar using DIY wall filler. Rub it into the lines with your finger, and then polish the brick faces clean with a dry sponge.

9 The asbestos roof is painted with Humbrol Pale Stone (121) and then dusted with talcum powder while tacky, so add a little weathering and some texture.

10 Pre-painted inner skylights are fitted, followed by a 13.5 by 17.5mm piece of glazing, and finished with the outer frame.

11 Choose your window; I've picked the older style with more panes, and fix some 225 by 22mm pieces of glazing to the back. Then pop them in the rebates in the walls.

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Budget Modelling Part 4: Airfix Castle and Bachmann 44xx

Tony Wright

HISTORICALLY, IT would appear that the GWR and its successor, the Western Region of British Railways, have always been the most-popular with regard to railway modelling. That seems to be the situation, and, certainly, models of its products, both in RTR form and in the range of kits, seem to substantiate this.

The principal subject in this little piece, the GWR Castle Class, has certainly been popular, and so has the small Prairie. Speaking of OO, the first RTR Castle was made by Hornby Dublo in the late-'50s, originally in 3-rail and then in 2-rail as well, as the 3-rail system finally realised the blind alley it was in. I believe Wrenn carried on making the model, but it was Airfix (later Dapol) in the '70s who upped the bar, so to speak; the main subject of this piece. Though tender-drive, it was looked upon as a very accurate model for its time. Of course, Hornby reintroduced this model in 1997, as 5042 *Winchester Castle* in a train pack. In 2001, the same base model was released as *Hogwarts Castle*, and this continued to 2009. Finally, in 2010, the current Hornby Castle appeared, entirely re-tooled, loco-drive and owing nothing to its predecessors. But that's expensive in comparison and doesn't fit into this 'budget modelling' series.

The Bachmann 45xx 2-6-2T does not have a lineage that far back, but it can certainly be obtained at 'bargain prices'.

VISIT US AT THE NEC

See all these models at the NEC this November! Tony Wright will be running a special presentation at the World of Railways Stage at The National Festival of Railway Modelling this November 22-23rd at The National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. The stage will offer a number of presentations, modelling advice, layout videos and expert panels for all visitors to enjoy as part of their entrance ticket. Don't miss the UK's ultimate model railway event, featuring incredible layouts, leading traders, expert demos, and more for enthusiasts of all ages! For more information, visit: **www.nfrm.co.uk**

ALL SKILL LEVELS

Airfix Castle

1 The model shop in Grantham is a rich source of model railway equipment at very good prices. Because I bought a fair bit at the time, I obtained this model for rather less than the ticket on the cab. It was generally in excellent condition.

2 One condition, usually associated with age, which these tender-drive loco types suffer from, is the splitting of their tender tyres. This was not a problem, as the shop gave me spares. They're a bit of a fiddle to fit (rather like fitting bike tyres on their wheels – one needs the equivalent of two spoons!).

3 Another problem with this model was that the vacuum ejector pipe (to which the offside handrail is attached) had come away from the boiler in part. I just stuck it back in place with superglue, held in place while the glue set with Sellotape – just a minute or two.

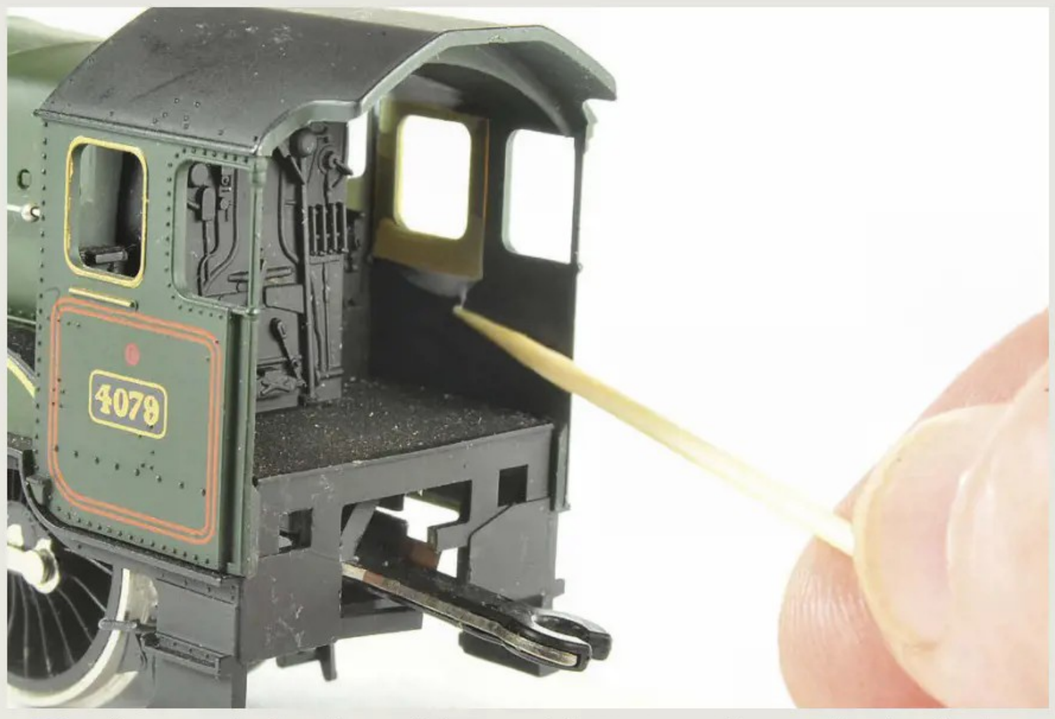
4 One upgrade, essential with regard to GWR RTR locos, is to fit etched brass names and numberplates. These are from Fox, but I've used others from the likes of 247 Developments, Modelmasters and Jackson Evans. All have been excellent.

5 The reason for substitution is apparent here. Not only did the printed-on name and numberplates have no relief, the printing was 'fuzzy', especially under powerful studio lighting.

6 The easiest way of fixing replacement 'plates, in my opinion, is to use Deluxe 'Glue'n'Glaze', a very fine PVA, applied sparingly with a cocktail stick. Impact adhesive is possible, but it's very stringy, and superglue grabs too quickly.

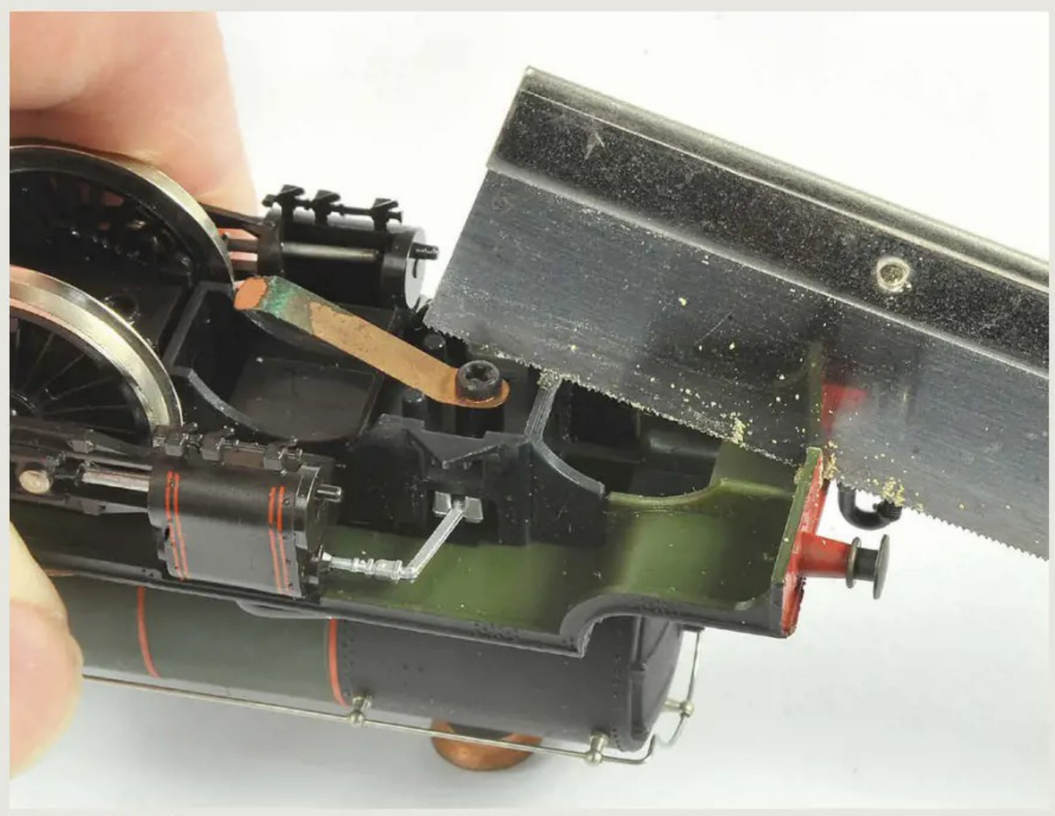
Getting Practical

7 The ‘Glue’n’Glaze’ held the replacement ‘plates’ perfectly, though tiny blobs of green paint were necessary later to cover the brass edges where they’d been cut from their surrounds.



8 One omission from this model was any form of cab glazing. This was easily rectified by cutting pieces of clear plastic (from packaging), which had ‘yellowed’ slightly with age, fixing them in place with the ‘Glue’n’Glaze’.

9 Using the cocktail stick, apply a thin layer of the ‘Glue’n’Glaze’ to create the front cab windows, allowing time to dry.



10 I suppose this model is showing its age by having no provision for a ‘scale’ front coupling. I just cut a slot in the buffer beam using a razor saw.

11 I’d already lopped off the tension-lock coupling from the front of the bogie and fitted a screw shackle from stock. GWR locos had a hook to the left of the buffer beam to secure the shackle. This was made from a piece of brass wire. I’d fitted lamps by this stage, too.

5040
Hatton bank. Immaculate 'Castle' No.5040 STOKESAY CASTLE climbs the bank with a Down express for Wolverhampton in August 1961. BLP-W

12 Prototype source material included Keith Pirt’s marvellous colour books, published by Booklaw. All the ‘plates are in place, the lamps and the motion have been weathered, and one of Ian Wilson’s Pacific Models front numberplates has been attached. The shiny handrails have also been painted over.

ALL SKILL LEVELS

Bachmann 44xx

1 This little 2-6-2T cannot claim to be as old as the Airfix Castle, which is good because it doesn't have a split chassis. Its box shows it's 'returned stock' (a poor runner or damaged), and I got it for rather less than the sticker on its box. The weathering is 'natural'.

2 Fox 'plates were also employed on this loco, the easiest way of cutting them out from their surrounds being by the use of sharp tinsnips, and then dressing back with a fine file.

3 The difference in the appearance of the etched brass numberplates and the printed-on originals is readily apparent. Could it be that the loco was originally returned because of that broken step?

4 The 'plates now fixed on (they're actually a tiny bit smaller than the printed-on originals), and a lamp in place. This lamp (and the ones on the Castle) is from Bachmann's own range and are reasonable representations of GWR types.

5 Complete (still with a slight touch of that 'natural weathering). The step has been repaired, the awful front tension-lock hurled in the bin and a proper screw shackle has been fitted (this one came from the packet of extras provided with Bachmann's latest L&NWR carriages, and is dead scale). A mutilated driver completes the job (he's only a torso, head and arms!). I saw a few of these dainty little locos at Chester, Wrexham and Shrewsbury – did they all have brass safety valve covers? This, too, will be on my stand at the NEC in November, and will also be sold for charity.

Build a Village School

Darius Aibara

THIS IS the first Metcalfe cardboard kit that I have attempted, and construction was very straightforward. I added some modifications to improve its appearance and constructed a small diorama to include a walled entrance and playground area. A nice touch is that this is a model of the village school that Nick Metcalfe attended as a child and is dedicated to the now-retired teacher who encouraged his model-making abilities.

Here's how I got on…

WHAT YOU NEED

Merten
Figures and bicycles

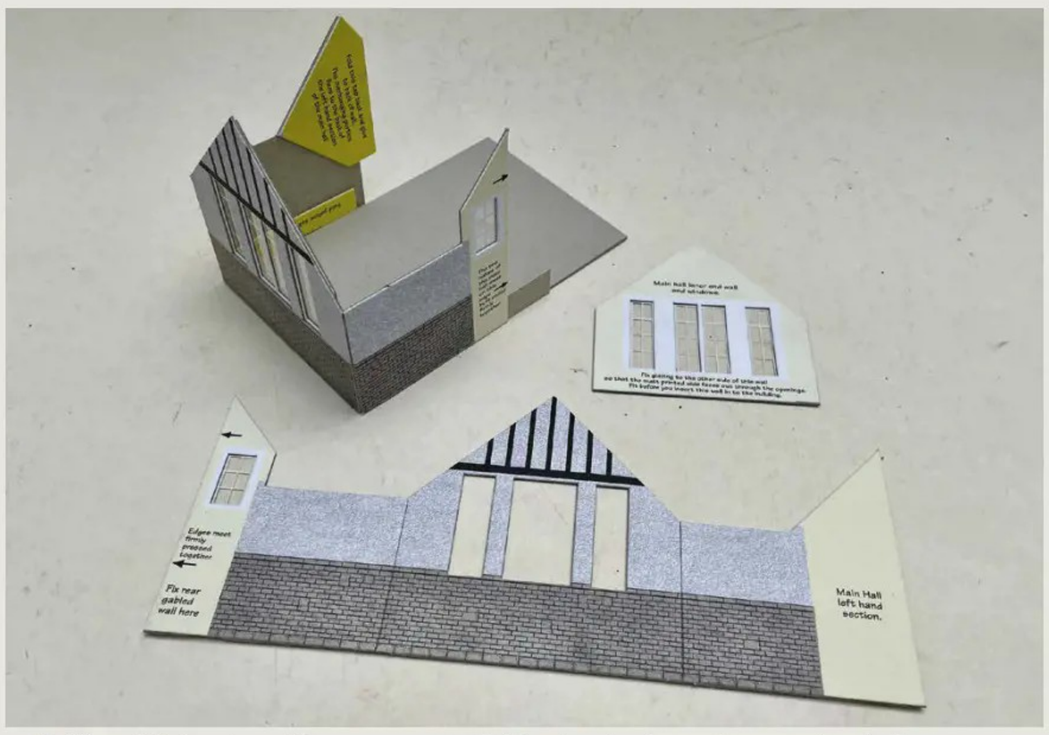
Metcalfe
PO253 00/H0 Scale Village School

Preiser
Figures

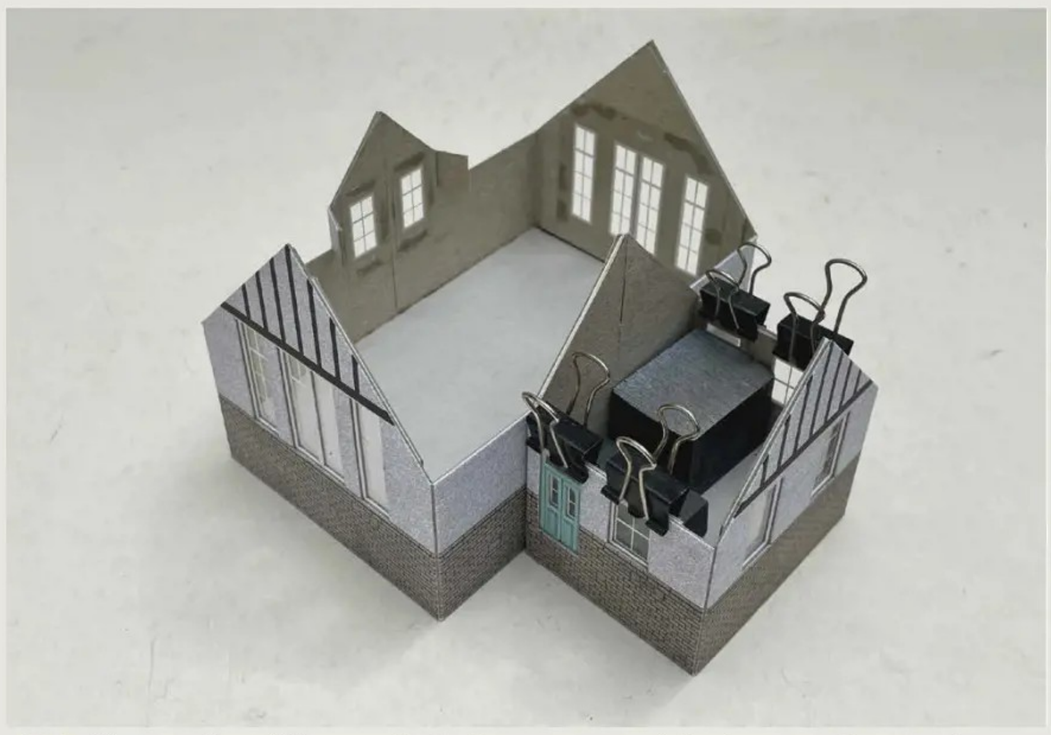
Scalemodelscenery
Download-at-home roof tile strips

Other
Craft knife, fine paint brush, dark grey spray primer, PVA adhesive, tacky wax, superglue, bulldog clips (for clamping), static grass applicator, brass rod, static grass, 3D-printed gates, brick paper, wire, 2mm and 1mm thick card

ALL SKILL LEVELS



1 The kit instructions are well illustrated and easy to follow. The first stage is to assemble the main school building walls. Window glazing is provided on a printed acetate sheet and these are cut out and fixed to the window frame parts using small dabs of superglue. I used PVA for the main construction.



2 The walls of the main hall are assembled around a card floor that is raised above ground level, sitting on the folded under tabs at the base of each wall. The wing building is assembled in the same way and glued to the side of the main hall. I used bulldog clips and a metal weight while the glue set.

3 The roof parts have the tiled effect printed on. I find this to be too uniform and one-dimensional and so I added strips of tiles that were from a download and print kit. This, I think, provides a more realistic tiled roof effect. This was done for both the main school and annexe buildings.

4 The downside of a flat-packed cardboard kit is the exposed card edges at the folded corners of the walls. I added gutters made from two strips of card glued together and downpipes made from brass rod bent to shape. These were pre-painted black before fixing to the model. The downpipes were glued into the corner recesses.

5 I made a playground base by laminating 2mm-thick cardboard sheets together and spraying them dark grey to represent an asphalt surface. The perimeter walls and gate piers were also made from laminated 2mm thick card and were faced with grey brick paper to match the school building brickwork. These were glued to the perimeter of the base – helping to stiffen it and prevent it from curving.

6 3D-printed school gates from eBay were painted and glued to the brick piers in the open position. The paved footpath outside the school was made from 2mm-thick card with the kerbstones and paving slabs scribed onto the surface. Grassed areas were added to the playground to break up the dark asphalt colour using mixed shades of static grass.

Getting Practical

7 I used pre-painted figures and bicycles from Merten and Preiser. These are HO, but they are infant-aged kids, so it doesn't matter. I made a bike rack from card and wire and a school sign using Windows Paint and more card.

8 I made kerbstones by cutting strips of 2mm thick card, painting them grey and glueing them to the base using PVA adhesive. I left a gap in the kerb line for the Annexe Building to slot into place.

9 The "non-asphalt" areas to one side of the kerb lines were painted deep brown in preparation for a layer of static grass, using different lengths and shades to create a realistic result.

10 The figures were arranged to represent a start-of-school scene. I used small amounts of Tacky Wax applied to the base of the feet to secure the figures in place. This works quite well provided it is not too windy.

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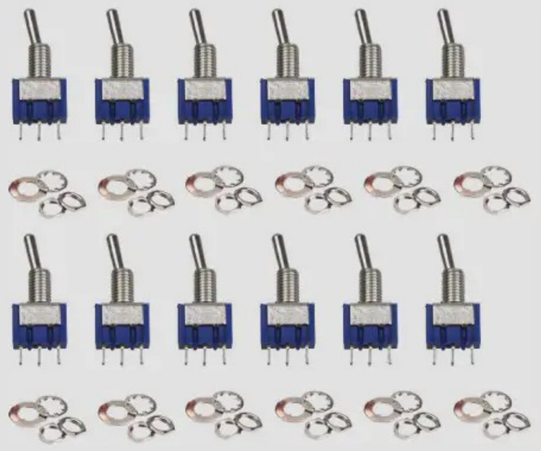

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Upgrading coaches for the preservation era

Michael Campbell

These ready-to-run coaches from Peco and Bachmann are superb models with fine liveries. However, when run on my layout, they look like models – being too clean and empty.

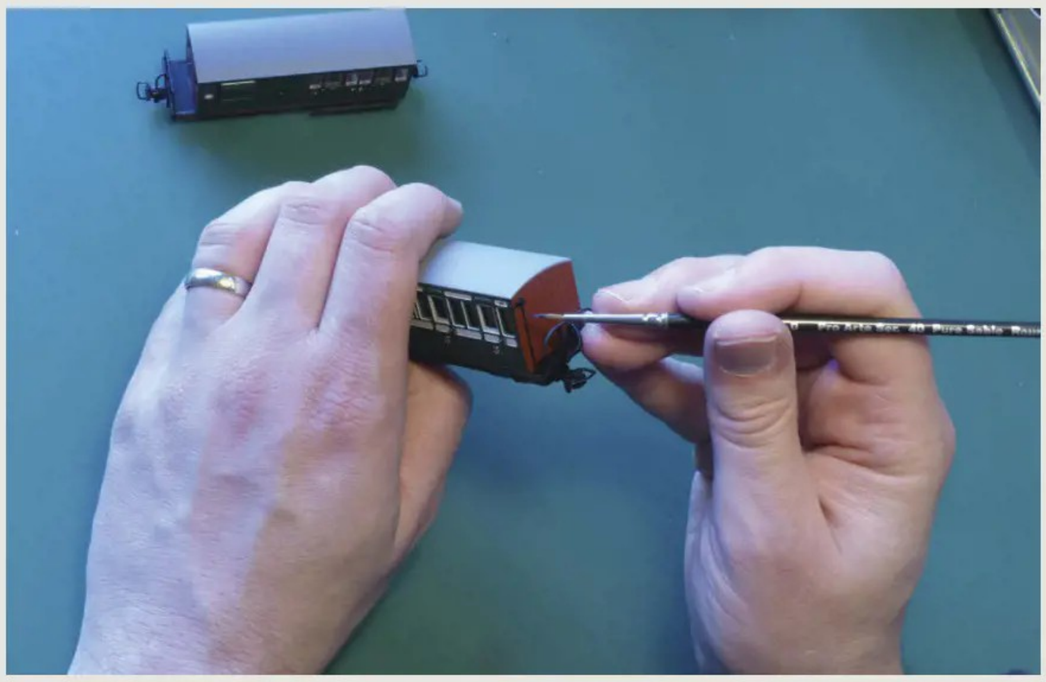
I'm modelling the preservation era, where coaches should appear clean, but sooty roofs are inevitable on a steam railway, and all railway vehicles seem to have underframes covered in brown dirt. A light weathering adds realism and is a straightforward task with an airbrush. At the same time, picking out some details and adding passengers further helps bring these models to life. I also need them to couple reliably and uncouple over a magnet. It doesn't take much work to prepare these models to fit in and work well on the layout.

While these coaches are 009, the same techniques are applicable to any scale. The subtle weathering of roofs and lower parts of the coaches gives them a more natural, realistic look, so they fit into the layout better than when box-fresh. Passengers are just visible and take away the emptiness, suggesting that the railway is serving a purpose.

WHAT YOU NEED

Craft knife or scalpel, fine files or emery paper, tweezers, seated figures, jewellers' screwdrivers, superglue, airbrush and compressor, paints of choice (I used acrylics over an automotive spray primer for the figures, and Vallejo model-air acrylic paints for airbrushing), scrap plastic sheet or card.

The 009 coaches as new. On the left is a Bachmann model of Ffestiniog Railway brake No.10, and on the right a Peco Ffestiniog Railway "bowsider" No.18.

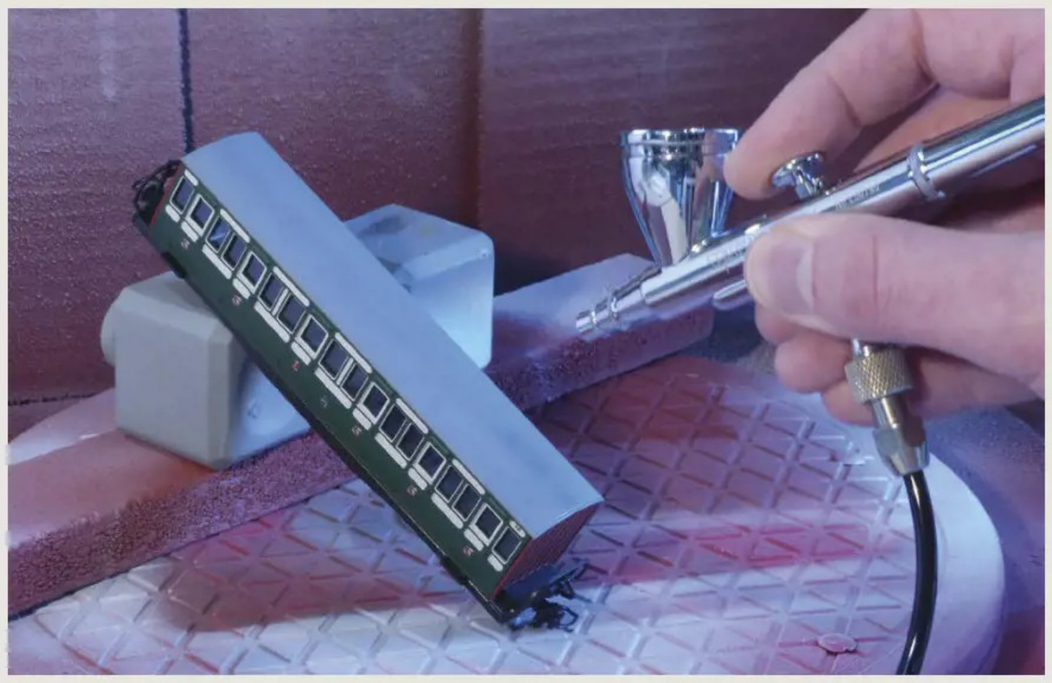


1 I started by touching up the emergency brake piping on the end of the Peco coach in black, as it is moulded in the red of the end. This calls for a steady hand but makes a surprising difference. Lamp brackets and steps can also be painted black.

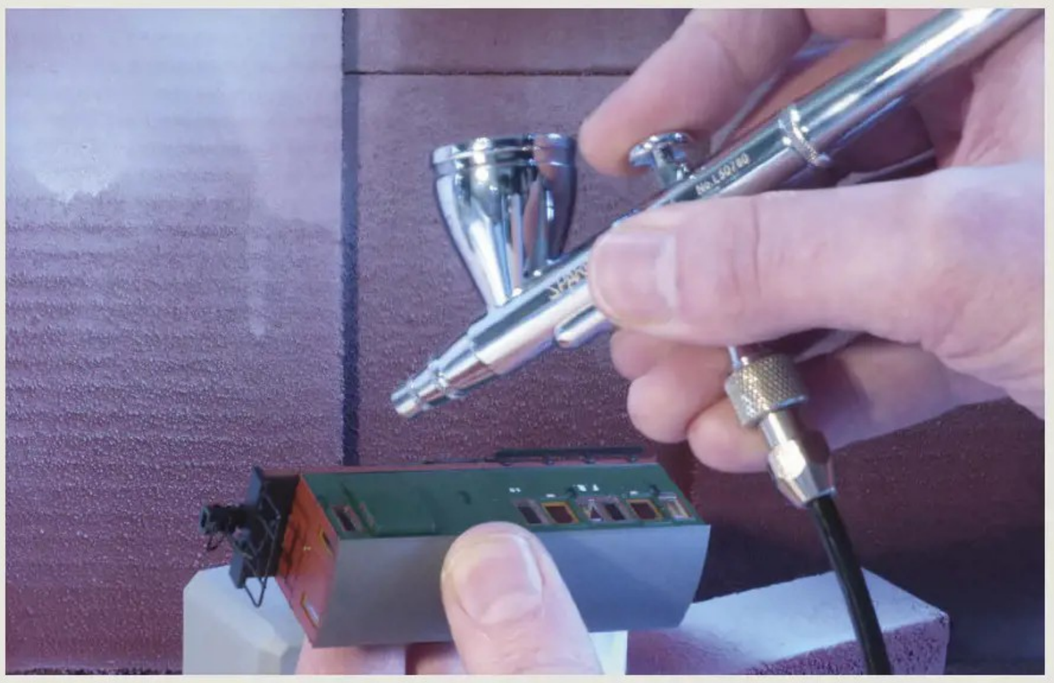
2 The first layer of dirt is a muddy brown wash over the underframe and bogies, which settles in crevices and around details. I used a pre-mixed acrylic wash, which is convenient and flows well, but you can mix your own.

3 The trigger of a dual-action airbrush flows air when pushed down, and when pulled back, opens the needle to flow paint. The knob at the back end of the handle is a stop, which, when screwed in, limits the needle opening and paint flow.

4 The stop is adjusted while spraying a piece of paper until a very fine spray is achieved; it is now impossible to spray more paint. The needle can clog with such a small opening, so periodically release the stop and spray to clear it, then repeat the process.



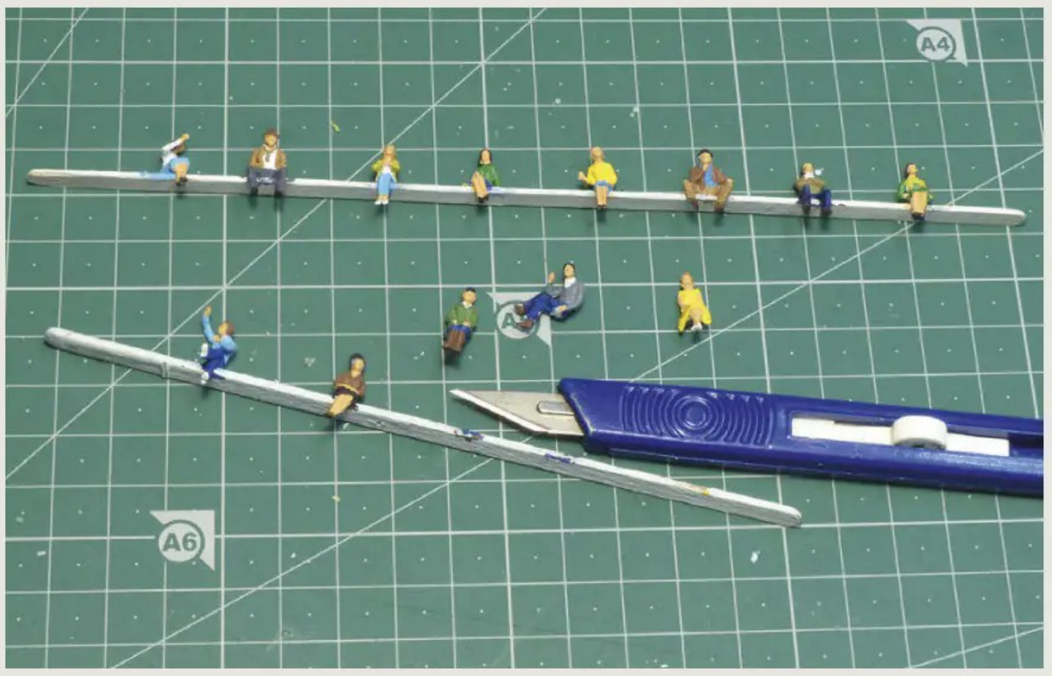
5 Black paint is then misted onto the roof from above, knowing that the stop limits paint flow. Gradually, build up soot staining to your taste. Move the coach around to spray from different angles, allowing some onto the upper ends, but not onto the coach sides.



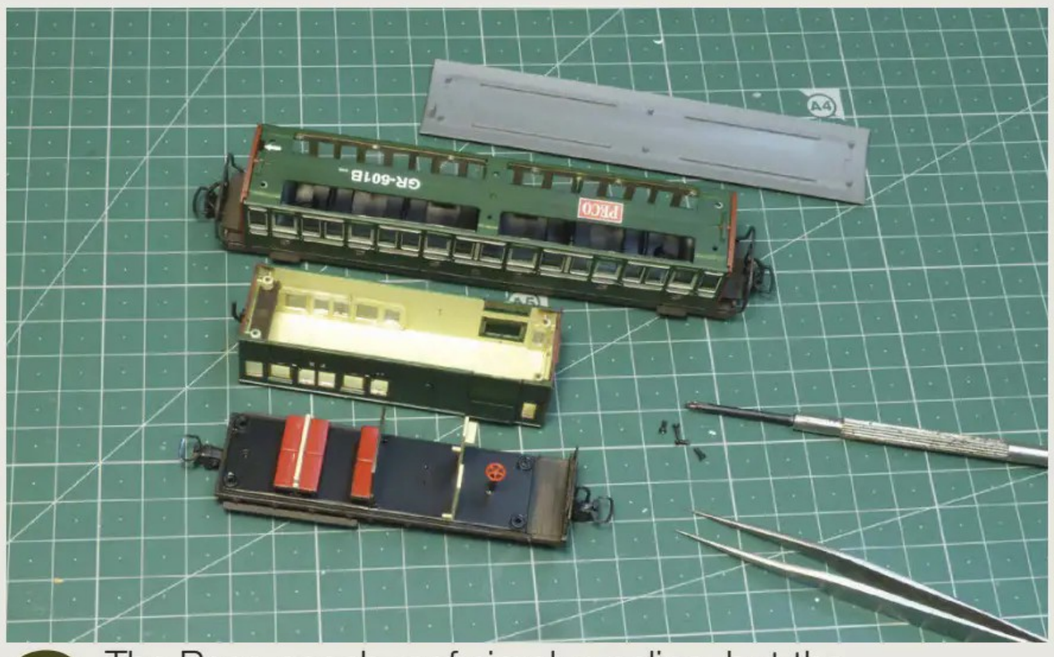
6 A mid-brown colour is then used, again with the needle stop limiting flow, over the bogies, underframes, and steps. This is applied from below, and as here, down from above, never directed at the sides but allowing just a little paint to stray onto the lower sides.

Getting Practical

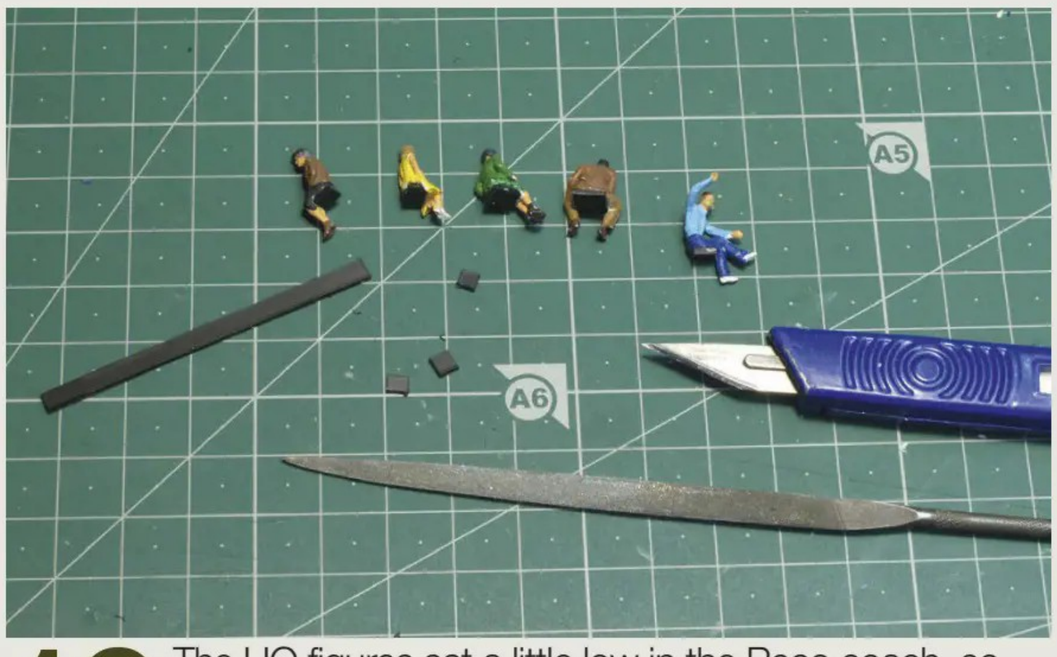
7 I use Preiser unpainted figures, which are good value, if a little under-scale (HO) and with some odd poses and clothing. Cut from the sprue and tidy with a file. A tip I got from Phil is to superglue them to a coffee stirrer for painting.



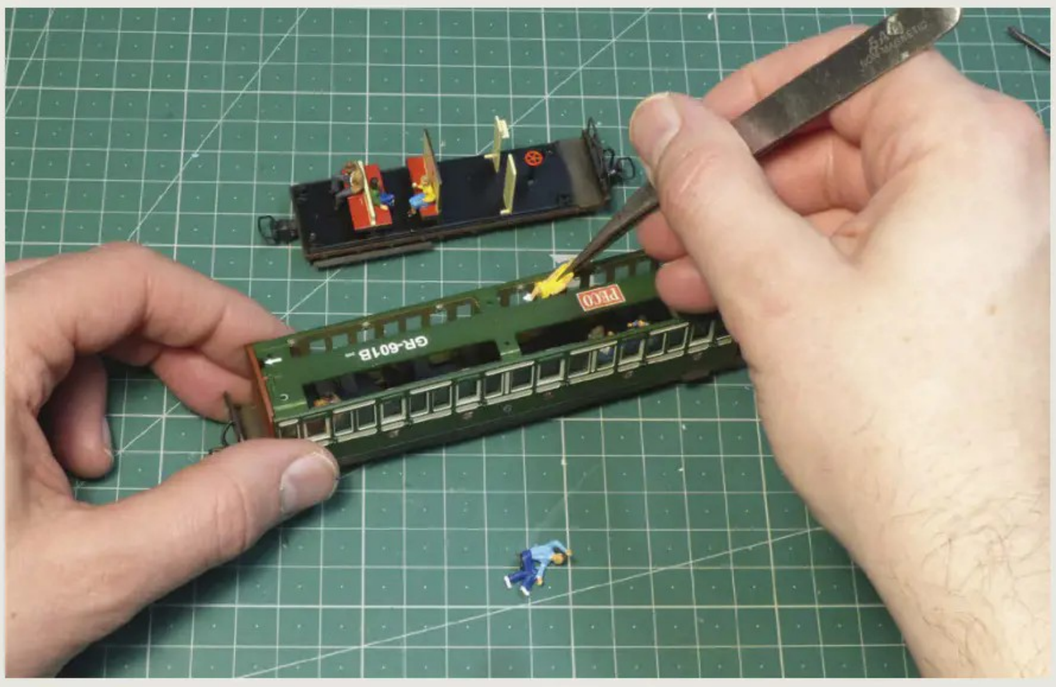
8 I primed the figures in white, then painted with acrylics. They will be barely visible, so no need to be neat, and for the modern era, bright colours help them to be seen. They are then snapped off the coffee stirrers with the aid of a scalpel tip.



9 The Peco coach roof simply unclips, but the Bachmann coach needs four very small screws removing from underneath – one in each corner. Keep them safe!



10 The HO figures sat a little low in the Peco coach, so I cut squares of 1mm black styrene (Plastikard) and stuck them to their bottoms! These “cushions” are not visible, but put the figures at a natural height in the windows.



11 The figures are then sat in place and fixed with a drop of superglue. The bracing within the Peco coach makes fitting fiddly, using tweezers helps control the figurines in the tight space. I find that a couple of figures in about half of the compartments is sufficient. Leave roofs off while the glue cures to prevent fumes from fogging the windows.

12 Bachmann 009 couplings (top left) won’t reliably couple to Peco ones (right). Thinning the buffing face by about 0.5mm (lower left) and chamfering/lowering the peg of the Bachmann coupling allows the Peco loop to couple to it. I make my couplings magnetically-operable by putting a couple of bends in a staple, shortening the legs, and supergluing it to the loop dropper sides so that the metal hangs behind the coupling.

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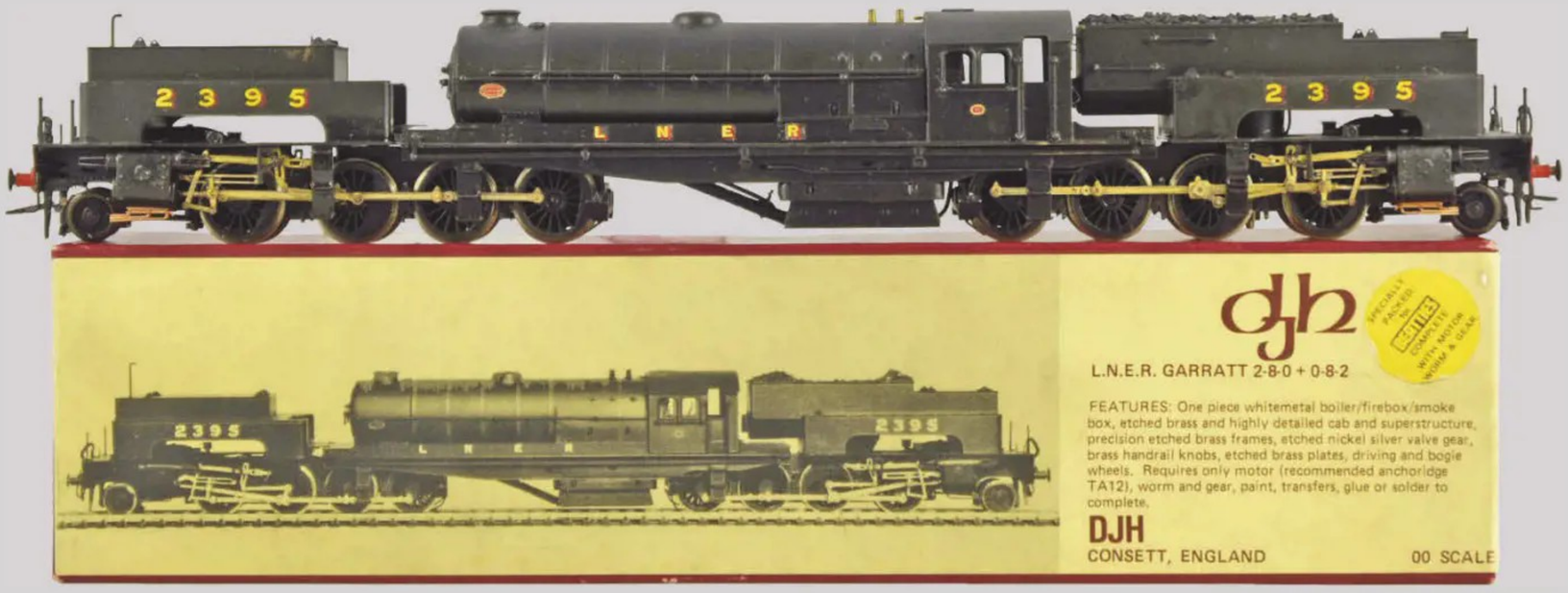
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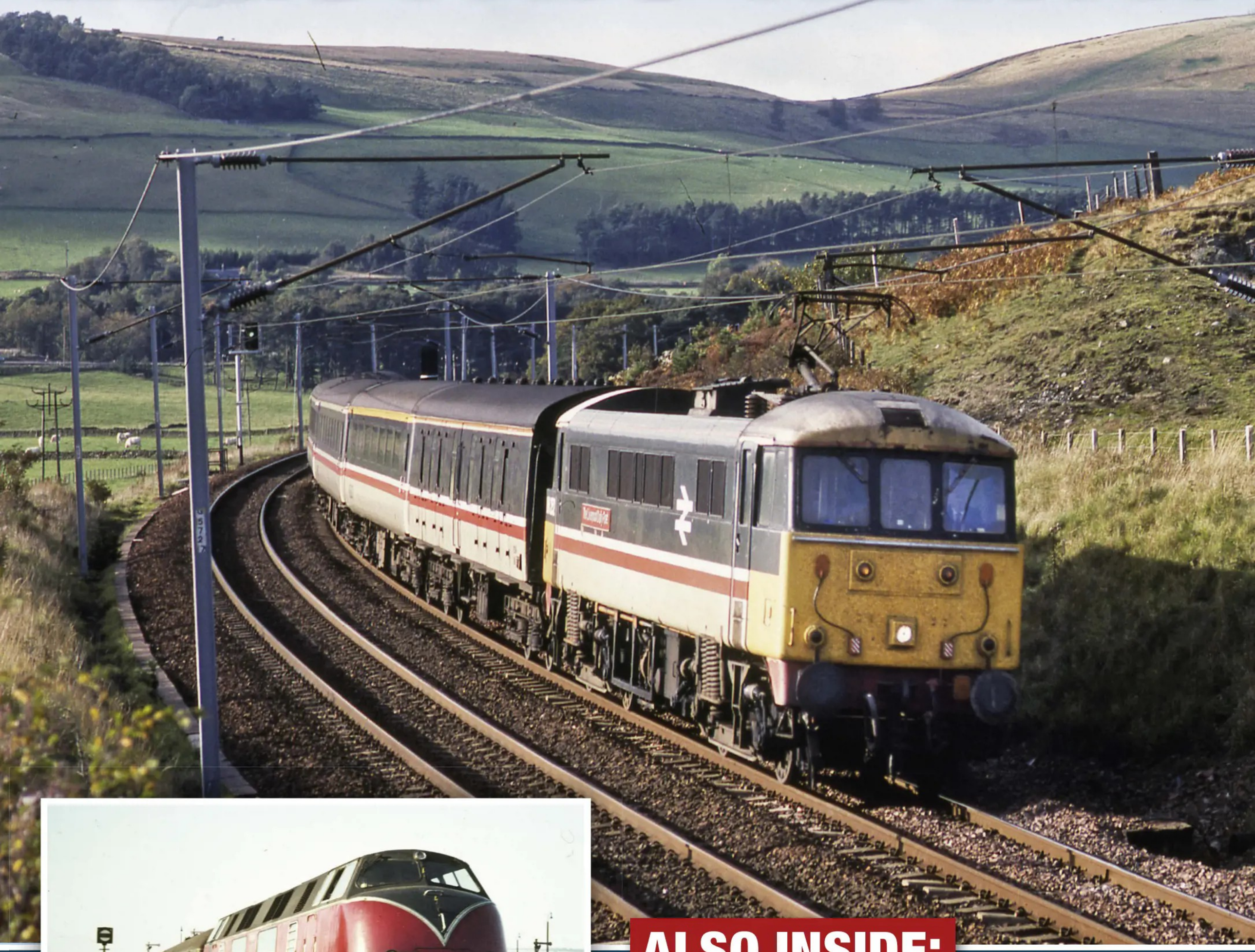
TRACTION

ISSUE 303 | DECEMBER 2025

ELECTRIC NORTH



ALSO INSIDE:

- Traction Heaven - Crewe
- Hydraulic Retrospective
- Test Units

TRACTION HEAVEN - CREWE IN THE EARLY-1970s

By Michael Fox

A Class 85 No. E3084 brings an up freight through Crewe station on March 13th, 1971. It is believed that 8K52 was an Ordsall Lane (in Manchester) to Cresswell working. It would change from electric to diesel before going forward to the Stoke-on-Trent line.
DAVID FORD

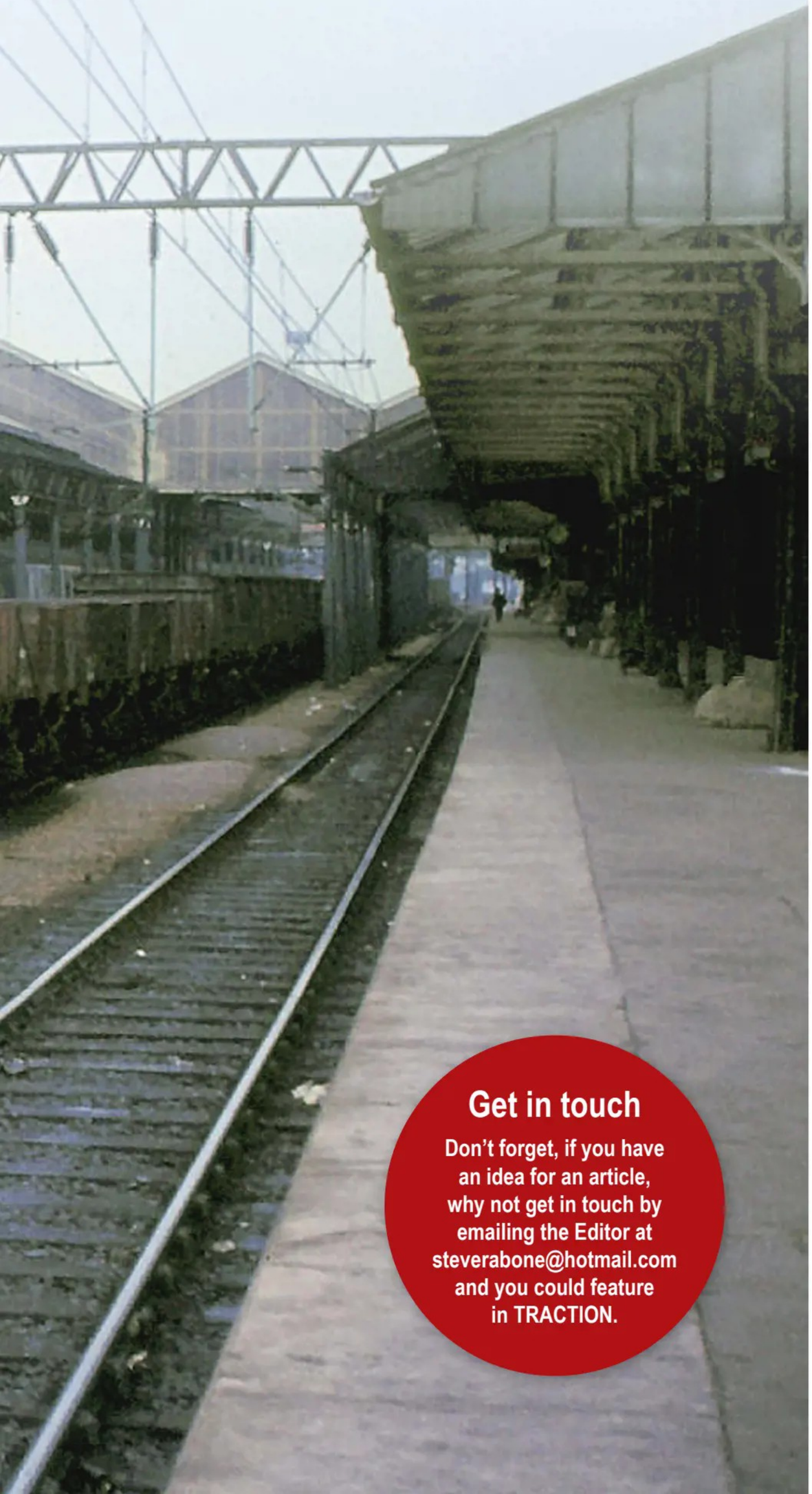
When I was a teenage spotter during the early-1970s, the place I went to most often was Crewe. I kept detailed written records of some of these visits. Reading these logs now not only gives an insight into the working of this very busy major station over half a century ago, but is a reminder of just how fascinating a place Crewe used to be for the traction enthusiast.

One of my earliest visits was on Saturday, February 13th, 1971. To convey an idea of what was on offer to the spotter at Crewe at this date, here follows a summary of all locomotive movements through the station during just one of the five hours that I was on the platforms.

First to appear was Class 86 E3157, which at 11:15 brought in a Euston to Liverpool Lime Street service. Three minutes behind was the 1P18 ex-Euston to Blackpool North behind Class 81 E3007; the Class 47 or '50' that would have replaced this here was not observed. A pair of Class 24s, 5023 and 5064, ran coal wagons south through the station at 11:23, followed four minutes later by an up 6A14 parcels in the charge of Class 50 432. What was probably one of the numerous 'Merrymaker' advertised excursions operated by BR at this period was worked north at 11:34 by double-headed Class 25s 5230 and 5236. Immediately afterwards, an express was brought off the Chester line by Class 40 307. Having started at Bangor (not Holyhead as the Britannia bridge was still in process of reconstruction after the disastrous fire in May 1970), this train would have been taken forward to Euston by an electric locomotive.

At 11:38, Class 86 E3104 entered with the 1M68 Cardiff Central to Manchester Piccadilly. Class 85 E3091 and Class 50 406 ran south light engine at 11:40 and 11:42, respectively. Double-headed Class 50s 420 and 436 completed their run from Glasgow Central with a Euston service at 11:49, passing classmates 409 and 414, which were getting ready to couple onto the 'Royal Scot' for Glasgow that had recently arrived from Euston behind Class 82 E3053. Two more light engine movements followed, Class 81 E3012 and paired Class 86s E3106 and E3120 working respectively to and from the electric depot located a short distance along the Chester line.

Having taken over from an unrecorded electric, Class 40 212 departed at 11:58 with the 1D56 Euston to Llandudno. Stratford-based Class 47 1579, which was presumably running-in after a stay at the local works, was attached as a pilot locomotive. Another Class 47, 1967, was running southbound light at 11:59, as a Liverpool-bound express pulled in from Euston behind Class 86 E3151. Crewe-based Class 08 shunter 3861 ambled south at 12:01 with a brake van in tow. Heading north with an unidentified express at 12:03 was Class 86 E3140, while sister locomotive E3181 appeared a minute later on the 1A47 Liverpool to Euston. Finally, two more Class 86s passed by, both running north, E3108 with what appeared to be empty coaching stock and E3170 heading a 1Z70 special passenger.



Get in touch

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Trains at Crewe 11.15 to 12.10: Saturday, February 13th, 1971
E3157 Class 86 Euston – Liverpool Lime Street. 11.15
E3007 Class 81 1P18 Euston – Blackpool North. 11.18 *
5023 + 5064 Class 24s Southbound coal wagons. 11.23
432 Class 50 6A14 southbound parcels. 11.27
5230 + 5236 Class 25s Northbound passenger ('Merrymaker' advertised excursion?). 11.34
307 Class 40 Bangor – Euston. 11.35 *
E3104 Class 86 1M68 Cardiff – Manchester Piccadilly. 11.38
E3091 Class 85 Southbound light engine. 11.42
406 Class 50 Southbound light engine. 11.43
420 + 436 Class 50s Glasgow Central – Euston. 11.49 *
E3053 Class 82 replaced by 409 + 414 Class 50s Euston – Glasgow Central 'ROYAL SCOT'
E3012 Class 81 Northbound light engine. 11.53
E3106 + E3120 Class 86s Southbound light engines. 11.55
212 Class 40 + 1579 Class 47 1D56 Euston – Llandudno. 11.58 *
1967 Class 47 Southbound light engine. 11.59
E3151 Class 86 Euston – Liverpool Lime Street. 11.59
3861 Class 08 Light engine off the Chester line. 12.01
E3140 Class 86 Northbound unidentified express. 12.03
E3181 Class 86 1A47 Liverpool Lime Street – Euston. 12.04
E3108 Class 86 Northbound unidentified passenger or ECS. 12.05
E3170 Class 86 1Z70 Northbound special passenger. 12.10
Note * Replacement diesel / electric loco not observed
Locos present on Crewe Diesel Depot: Saturday, February 13th, 1971
Class 08: 3031/ 3093/ 3190/ 3583/ 3861/ 3868/ 3984
Class 24: 5002/ 5004/ 5022/ 5023/ 5028/ 5039/ 5052/ 5058/ 5059/ 5062/ 5077
Class 25: 5244/ 5293
Class 40: 241/ 307
Class 47: 1623/ 1635/ 1711/ 1713/ 1738/ 1750/ 1754/ 1780/ 1837/ 1838/ 1939/ 1940/ 1945/ 1948/ 1950/ 1952/ 1959
Class 50: 400/ 419/ 420/ 424/ 426/ 429/ 432/ 434/ 436/ 439/ 441/ 442/ 443/ 444/ 445
Freight trains on Saturday, May 4th, 1974
40185 6D33 southbound oil tanks. 09.12
25072 + 25218 Northbound bogie-bolsters. 09.22
24035 + 24046 Southbound coal wagons. 11.18
24026 Northbound rail sections. 11.58
47151 Northbound 'Cartic 4' wagons. 13.36
40013 Southbound chemical tanks. 14.24
47106 Southbound freightliner. 14.33
25301 6O80 southbound oil tanks. 14.55
1855 4M67 northbound Freightliner. 15.10
24087 Southbound engineers' wagons. 15.10
47238 4Z45 northbound Chrysler wagons. 15.2

Nos. 427 and 426 depart Crewe in September 1972 with the 10:05 Euston to Glasgow. The train was booked to stop for 10 minutes to change from electric to diesel power. BRIAN IRELAND

In those 60 minutes, no fewer than 28 locomotives were seen (15 diesel and 13 electric) from 10 different classes. The variety and business would continue undiminished for the rest of my stay. It was just an ordinary day at the Crewe in that period.

As ever, expresses were the main traffic to be seen at Crewe station that Saturday. Nearly half the trains that passed during the 60 minutes just described were Inter-City workings to or from Euston or Birmingham, all of which services had by the early-'70s been electrically-powered through Crewe for several years past. Taking the day as a whole, Class 86s headed two out of three of these trains, with Class 85s and the odd Class 81 handling the rest: the Class 82 on the down 'Royal Scot' could well have been a rare choice.

Trains to and from Preston and beyond and along the Chester line switched between diesel and electric traction during the stop at Crewe. These changes were frequent; five trains in the log above would have needed one and they must have added greatly to the complexity of operations at the station. Watching these swaps was a big part of the entertainment on offer at Crewe.

Workings along the North Wales coast often had a Class 40 west of Crewe: both 307 and 212 appear in the log above. The changes on West Coast Main Line (WCML) services to and from the Preston line frequently involved a Class 50 and a Class 86. A typical instance was in mid-afternoon when 415 and E3131 performed a swap on the 1A63 Carlisle/Blackpool North to Euston. Best to watch were the traction exchanges on the Glasgow expresses, probably the most important trains of the day, handled at Crewe station.

With the aim of helping maintain schedules during the major project to electrify the WCML between Weaver Junction and Scotland, from May 1970, the Euston to Glasgow services were allocated double-headed Class 50s north of Crewe. A small crowd of platform-enders would form to watch the Glasgows switch engines. The change from E3053 to 409 + 414 recorded above was one of three with doubled-up '50s' that I saw during my stay: in mid-afternoon, the 1S63 Euston–Glasgow, shed Class 85 E3076 for 409 + 443, and an hour later 435 + 437 arrived

E3190 runs into Crewe with 1A38, the 11:04 Liverpool Line Street to Euston on March 13th, 1971. DAVID FORD

A pair of Class 24s Nos. 5012 and 5073, both in very dirty green, bring a southbound train of coal wagons through the centre roads on March 13th, 1971. The author saw what was probably this working on both his visits. DAVID FORD

Having just taken over from an electric locomotive, Class 40 No. 215 *Aquitania* pulls out of Crewe with a London Euston to Bangor train on February 5th, 1972. DAVID FORD

from the north before handing over to Class 86 E3110. I recorded that all three of these trains accomplished the change within the nine minutes allowed. This was very smart station work.

Over a quarter of the workings in the log are light engine movements, and this excludes the manoeuvrings of locomotives detaching from or attaching to expresses. Unspectacular they may have been, but light engines once formed a sizeable part of operations at Crewe. Many of these locomotives were going to and from the electric depot or alternatively, the diesel depot that was situated near the south end of the station. Obviously heading for the former, shunter 3105 crawled past in mid-afternoon with Class '81' E3012 in tow. The yards at the London end of the station accounted for other movements. As an example, Class 47 1967, which ran south at noon, soon reappeared, heading north with an 8L97 oil tanks that it had most probably collected at Basford Hall yard.

Later on the Saturday afternoon, a group of us left the station and walked the short distance to the diesel depot. Despite none of us being older than 14, our request for permission to look around was granted readily, and nobody was assigned to supervise us. Crewe Diesel Depot was always a busy place, but, being the weekend, it was packed with locomotives, 54 being present.

The majority of the locomotives seen at the depot were allocated to Crewe or, more accurately, 'DO5', the London Midland's Stoke Division, for which Crewe Diesel was the main depot. All the Class 50s present were in DO5, as were the Class 24s, Crewe having charge of several dozen of these stocky if under-powered locomotives that worked much of the parcels, departmental and lighter freight traffic in the area. 13 of the 17 Class 47s on shed were likewise Crewe assets. An interloper among them was Stratford-based 1780.

Taking my five-hour stay as a whole, I logged a grand total of 127 locomotives: 86 diesels (nine Class 08s;15 Class 24s; four Class 25s; seven Class 40s; 26 Class 47s; 25 Class 50s – exactly half the Class), and 41 electrics (seven Class 81s; one Class 82; 14 Class 85s; 19 Class 86s).

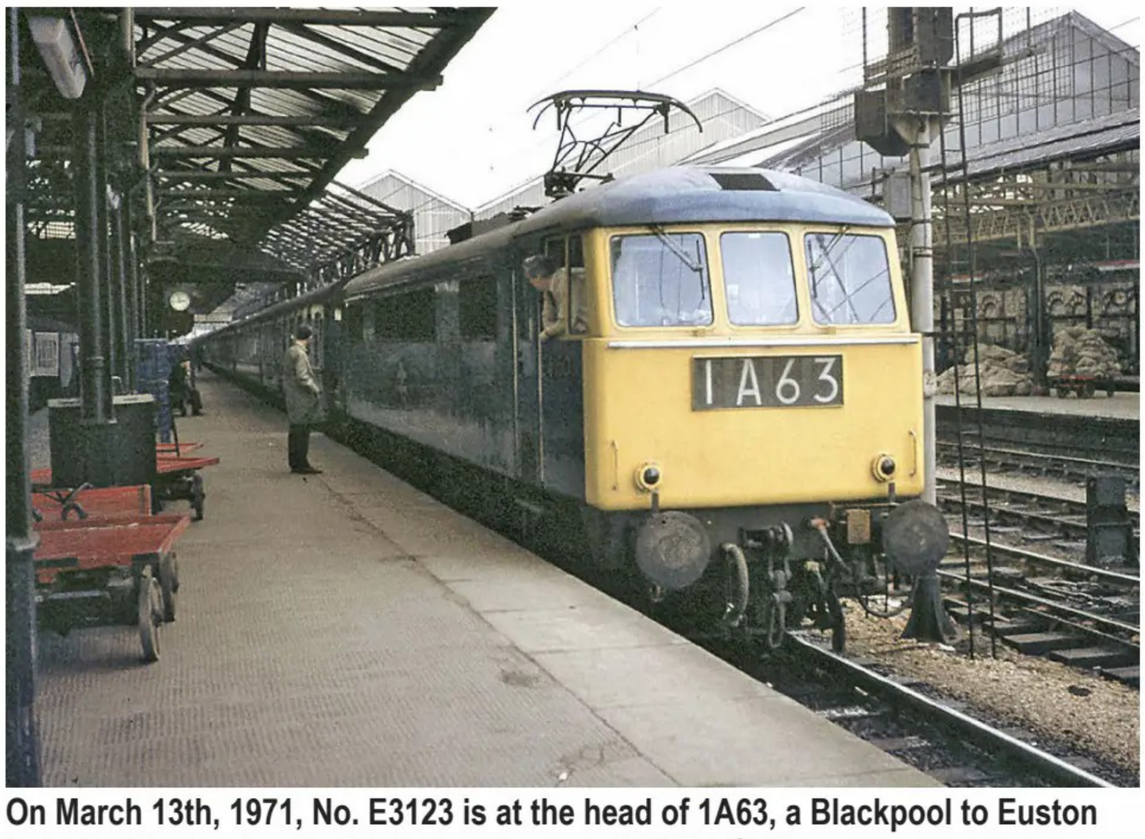
A return visit in May 1974

Not surprisingly, I would return to Crewe several times over the next few years. The most memorable occasion was May 4th, 1974, another Saturday. I picked this date deliberately as it was two days before the full launch of the completed electrification of the WCML through to Scotland and I was keen to see some of the final traction changeovers at Crewe station. Although there was less to watch than I had expected, it turned out that many of the locomotive changes were now taking place at Preston, there were still a few to see. They included both up and down 'Royal Scots', 50037 giving way on the former to 86020, and 50036 taking charge of the Glasgow-bound service from Class 87 87025. It will be noted that neither of these services had two Class 50s at the head, and nor did any of the few other Preston line trains that were diesel-worked. For example, lone 50021 took on the 1S75 Euston to Glasgow from 86221.

Class 25 No. 5298 arrives at Crewe with 3A14, a Heysham Harbour to Euston parcels train on February 5th, 1972. The diesel will be replaced by an electric locomotive for the journey south. At this time, traffic that would have passed through Holyhead was going via Heysham because of the damage to the bridge over the Menai Straits. This was another service that the author witnessed in 1971. DAVID FORD

An unidentified Class 40 comes off the Chester line with an express from Bangor to Euston on February 5th, 1972. DAVID FORD

Probably the main cause of what would appear to have been low availability of Class 50s that Saturday was that several had already been transferred to the Western Region as replacements for Class 52 'Westerns'; by 1976, all would have gone. The void the '50s' left would be filled by electrics. The locomotive that brought in 50036's train just mentioned was among these newcomers, 87025 being one of the 36 new-build 5,000 HP Class 87s that were to spearhead the 'Electric Scots' timetable north of Crewe. These locomotives were still in course of delivery and only a handful were in action that day: 87013 was at the head of a Euston to Glasgow service, for example, while 87014 powered a Euston to Barrow train. Also in evidence were some of the Class 83s and Class 84s that had been in store at the time of my 1971 visit, but which had been revamped since then to help meet the need for more electric traction on the fully electrified West Coast: 83007 was on the 1V91 Liverpool to Plymouth, whilst both 83008 and 84002 headed parcels trains.



On March 13th, 1971, No. E3123 is at the head of 1A63, a Blackpool to Euston train that had arrived behind diesel power. DAVID FORD

Another Class 84 on duty was 84010. This was one of a small army of electrics that had been mustered to haul specials carrying fans from Merseyside to see Liverpool FC defeat Newcastle United 3 - 0 in the FA Cup Final. Reportedly, there were at least 13 of these 'Footexes' from Liverpool, some to Euston and others to Wembley, and all passed through Crewe station in late morning. I saw nine of them. The first seven, each comprising a set of Mk. 1 coaches, were in addition to 84010, hauled by Class 81 E3011, and five Class 86s. The other two workings were each formed of one of the impressive Manchester or Liverpool Pullman sets that were spare at the weekend, Class 85 E3064 and Class 86 86247 having charge. A train from Manchester slotted in between the rest, hauled by Class 87 87004. It seems incredible now that the railway had the resources available to meet such a big demand. Most of this spare capacity would be taken out under the harsher financial regime imposed on the network over the next decade or so.

Also adding to traffic through Crewe on this busy Saturday were a number of freight services. While many freights in the Crewe area followed the Independent Lines, which, frustratingly, were not visible from the platforms, a fair number were routed through the station. I logged a total of 11 freight or departmental workings during my eight-hour stint. Class 24s worked three of them; 24026 pulling a load of rail panels north, 24087 heading south with permanent way trucks, and 24035 and 24046 double-heading southbound coal wagons. Northbound bogie-bolsters produced paired Class 25s 25072 and 25218, whilst classmate 25301 was at the head of southbound oil tanks, train 6O80, labelled as bound for Grain in Kent. Another up oil train, headcode 6D33, was powered by Class 40 40185, 40013 heading the same way with chemical tanks. Each of the other four services was headed by a Class '47': 47151 had charge of northbound 'Cartic 4' wagons, 47238 was at the front of a 4Z45 northbound string of Chrysler wagons, and 47106 and 1855 were both hauling Freightliners, one heading south, the other (4M67) running north. This represents a typical cross-section of the diesel traction to be seen at Crewe in the 1970s.

This photo takes us back to that era in the early-1970s when the steam age infrastructure and signage still existed. A Class 86 No. E3123 comes to a halt with 1H31, a London Euston to Manchester express, on March 13th, 1971. DAVID FORD

On March 13th, 1971, No. E3161 rolls into Crewe from the south with an express from Euston to Liverpool. Over to the right is Crewe Diesel Depot with examples of Classes 40, 47 and 50 on view. DAVID FORD

By the time of the author's 1974 visit, the Class 87s had appeared in preparation for the completion of the West Coast Main Line electrification through to Glasgow. Here we see 87025 departing Crewe with a train for the north on April 14th, 1979. RAY BRISCALL

The Class 25 hauling train 6O80, just mentioned, halted in the station for Class 85 E3066 to take over. I also recorded two up parcels workings changing traction there: train 3A14 relinquished 25105 for 86004, and Class 85 E3084 came off its 4V20 Manchester to Cardiff vans to allow 25030 to assume control. Clearly, locomotive swaps at Crewe Station were not confined to WCML expresses.

A visit to Crewe diesel was not on the itinerary on this occasion, but the north end of the shed and part of the holding sidings immediately adjacent were readily visible from the station through binoculars. Among the many locomotives present at various times during my stay were the only Class 82 of the day, 82008, and a visitor from the Eastern Region, 125, a Holbeck-based Class 45. In my experience, 'Peaks' were always rare birds at Crewe.

Train working at Crewe was of a high order that Saturday, despite the large volume of traffic, especially during the morning. I timed 34 of the total of 49 Inter-City workings that passed through during my stay. 18 of these were on time, 15 between one and five minutes late, and one was six minutes in arrears. Nothing was cancelled. Although the record I had made of punctuality on my 1971 visit was less comprehensive, the picture had been much the same. Then, 14 of the 24 expresses I timed at the station were on schedule, eight between one and five minutes late, one six minutes down and another seven minutes adrift. Could today's operators match these performances?

By the time I began the return run to Manchester behind Class 85 E3080 on the 1M22 ex-Plymouth to Piccadilly, my tally of locomotives for the day had reached 137.

This was made up of 60 diesels of six different classes: 16 Class 24s; eight Class 25s; 10 Class 40s; one Class 45; 15 Class 47s; 10 Class 50s. There were 77 electrics from seven classes: three Class 81s; one Class 82; five Class 83s; four Class 84s; 15 Class 85s; 43 Class 86s (approaching half of the 100 in traffic) and six Class 87s.

The railway scene at Crewe that I recorded in 1971 and 1974 has changed almost completely since, not least as regards the steep decline in the number of locomotives in use. I still visit on occasion, but for me, a 'Pendolino' will never be a substitute for a pair of Class 50s.

TEST UNITS CONTINUED

By David Ratcliffe

The 1954-built Derby 'lightweight' two-car unit, DMBS M79018 and DTC M79612, was converted into an Ultrasonic Test Unit in 1970. The Driving Motor Brake Second coach provided crew accommodation while the test equipment was mounted on a wheeled 'sled' slung between the bogies of the Driving Trailer Coach to gather data on rail conditions. Renumbered as DB975007/008, the unit remained in use for over two decades until a lack of spare parts resulted in its withdrawal in the early-1990s.
TREVOR MANN COLLECTION

Of the handful of diesel multiple units that have been purpose-built or modified to work as test vehicles, perhaps the best known is the two-car Track Recording Unit, which was ordered by the Director of Civil Engineering in 1987. Built at York, and based on the Class 150/1 Sprinter design, it was subsequently fitted out with recording equipment by the Engineering Development Unit at Derby RTC and has regularly visited all parts of the network. Numbered DB999600/601, the set was initially painted in the Mobile Track Assessment livery of light blue and grey with a red stripe, this being replaced by Railtrack blue and green, before a further repaint into Network Rail yellow took place during 2005. Different recording and computer equipment can be carried inside coach 999600, while track monitoring cameras and high-intensity lights can be fitted to each end of the unit, which is pictured at Didcot in September 2002. DAVID RATCLIFFE

The replacement Ultrasonic Test unit was formed of former 4-REP Mk.1 coach No. 62483, which was converted for departmental use at Cardiff Cathays in 1987. Renumbered DB999602, it initially carried a BR-designed wheel and probe ultrasonic system, later replaced by Sperry Ultrasonic Rail Testing equipment, while to haul DB999602 around the network a pair of Class 101 DMU vehicles, Nos. 51433 and 50167 were converted at Derby. These were renumbered DB977391/392, being fitted with air brakes, group-standard marker/tail and headlight assemblies and three-section miniature snowploughs. The resultant three coach train, given set number 901001, is seen in its original livery at Eastleigh on May 6th, 1992, when about to form 7Z08, the 09:05 departure to Stewarts Lane. TREVOR MANN COLLECTION

In 1992, one of the Derby two-car Class 114 DMU, which had been converted four years earlier into a parcels unit and numbered 55929 and 54904, was modified again as an Automatic Train Protection Test Unit and renumbered as TDB977775/776. However, this use also proved short-lived and by 1996 the set had become a route learning and inspection saloon based at Bescot. It is seen in this role when stabled at Warrington Arpley Low Level in September 1996. DAVID RATCLIFFE

Pressed Steel Class 121 single car No. 55029 was taken into departmental service in 2001. Renumbered 977968, it was fitted with track geometry testing equipment, being recorded at Rugby in October 2003 when in the yellow, blue and mauve livery of Euroscout GB. Subsequently, this single car was also used for route learning before being preserved at the Rushton Transport Museum. DAVID RATCLIFFE

A HYDRAULIC RETROSPECTIVE

Colin Boocock takes readers back to the mid-1950s when the sudden interest by BR's Western Region in diesel hydraulics took some people by surprise.

For us young trainspotters in 1957, the only main line diesel locomotives most of us had seen were the LMS 'twins' and the three Southern 1Co-Co1s, unless we had ventured across the Irish Sea and experienced CIÉ's A Class Co-Cos making their smoke and smells as they hauled Ireland's express or freight trains.

All these locomotives were weighing in at over 100 tons, apart from the Irish ones, and they were lighter mainly because they contained no train heating steam generator. Among the heaviest of the pack were the English Electric Type 4s at 133 tons; their weight and their gearing for 90mph proving to be a distinct disadvantage when required to haul heavy trains over hills such as Shap or Beattock. The BR/Sulzer Type 4s were also as heavy, but had an extra 500bhp to power them, which did help.

At that time, an output of around 2,500bhp was the practical limit for technical development of reliable rail traction diesel engines, though that was to change in the 1960s and later decades.

A different solution was being supplied to the railways of West Germany for similar duties. The Deutsche Bundesbahn's Class V200 B-Bs of 2,200 bhp employed two faster-speed, much lighter-weight, 1,100bhp diesel engines coupled to hydraulic transmissions inside a body designed as a full load-bearing box structure, enabling a total locomotive weight of just 80 tons even though they did carry train heating boilers. I recall being hauled by one of these in 1958 from Ludwigshafen along the Rhein valley as far as Cologne; we were on a heavy northbound express at the time and the locomotive kept time, though a Class 01 4-6-2 steam locomotive would probably have done so, too!

Our retrospect really starts here, in Germany. Deutsche Bahn's 2,200bhp B-B No. V200.060 arrives at Bebra on the Hannover to Frankfurt (Main) main line with a southbound express on October 18th, 1962. This design was altered to fit the BR loading gauge in order to produce the BR Class 42 'Warship' type.

In the late-1950s, we began to realise that these diesel locomotives could only match and not exceed the performances of the highest-powered steam locomotives of the day. The advantage that these modern traction locomotives could offer was improved utilisation, not needing to be serviced at depots anything like as often as a steam locomotive. So around two well-utilised diesels could easily replace three or four steam locomotives. They were also perceived as offering a cleaner environment than steam locomotives ever could, and eventually could be single-manned.

The engineers at British Railways Western Region were well aware of the potential advantages of lighter diesel locomotives and pressed hard for diesel hydraulics to be tried when BR was developing its main line diesel pilot scheme. The UK government insisted that the locomotives had to be built in the UK to help conserve overseas currencies. So, the North British Locomotive Company put together its own designs for both Types 4 and 2 diesel hydraulics. The Type 4 was of A1A-A1A wheel arrangement and tipped the scales at 117 tons, lighter certainly than the big diesel electrics, but much heavier than the DB V200 design. This type had two 12-cylinder MAN diesel engines of 1,100bhp output each driving through Voith hydraulic torque converter transmission. This design did not make it past the pilot group of five locomotives, presumably because of its weight.

The Western Region did better by somehow getting permission to adopt the V200 design, but shrunk the body profile so that it could fit into the BR loading gauge. Thus emerged the first of the D800 B-Bs, each with two 12-cylinder Maybach 1,100bhp engines driving through Mekydro hydro-mechanical gearboxes. These turned the scales at 78 tons, being the lightest of all the Type 4 designs used by BR. These were built at Swindon Works, which had a steep learning curve to climb so that it could apply the correct methods of assembling the stressed-skin bodysides that formed part of the weight-bearing structure. The class eventually totalled 38 locomotives of class 42, and were named mostly after Warships.

BR's first diesel hydraulic main line locomotive was NBL A1A-A1A D600 *Active*, seen here at Swindon on March 17th, 1963. The locomotive design was not repeated after five were built, though the traction system (MAN engine plus Voith transmission) was used in the class 43 B-Bs later.

NBL Type 2 diesel hydraulic B-B No. D6352 poses at Swindon on March 17th, 1963.

One of the regular 'Warship' duties was the Cornish Riviera Express, here headed by D809 *Champion* dropping down Bruton bank on October 10th, 1959.

The British result was, in the author's view, not quite so striking in appearance as the German locomotive. Here is one-year-old B-B D807 *Caradoc* at Old Oak Common on September 25th, 1960, at a time when the WR and LMR in particular often maintained both steam and diesel locomotives in the same depot.

North British followed later with much the same design as the Swindon one, but with MAN engines and Voith transmission. There were 33 of these, also named as Warships. The 42s and 43s were primarily used as top link main line locomotives, displacing steam locomotives as they were introduced. They were initially used on the main lines out of London Paddington to Bristol, Plymouth and Cardiff. Later, as diesel electrics also began to take on WR main line work, the 'Warships' had a period of a few years in the 1960s, working the line between London Waterloo and Exeter.

All the 'Warships' were based for maintenance at Plymouth Laira or Newton Abbot, with one for a while at Old Oak Common. The main depots were equipped with neat lifting shops where engines and transmissions could be exchanged without the need for the locomotives to be shipped off to main works. This soon proved to be necessary because of the relative unreliability of the locomotives after heavy service use.

People used to debate how DB managed not to have such reliability problems with their V200s. Perceived wisdom was that BR used its locomotives more intensely than the German railways did, so BR hit the problems earlier and more severely. Other commentators alleged that the UK-built engines were less well engineered than the same designs built in Germany, but I have seen no proof of that.

In parallel with the pilot Type 4s, North British also produced a class of B-B Type 2 for lighter, secondary work. This D6300 series was selected for further production. A total of 58 locomotives joined the Western Region fleet. These were each basically half a Type 4, with one engine and transmission each of the same MAN-plus-Voith format. A Type 2 locomotive weighed 65 to 68 tons. In parallel with this design, North British also produced a diesel-electric Type 2. The first batch went to the Eastern Region, working out of Stratford depot on King's Cross and Liverpool Street suburban trains. They soon headed north to Scotland, where they spent the rest of their careers. No serious effort was made to compare the two types.

Meanwhile, the Type 2 diesel hydraulics found useful work on freight and stopping trains, including in the West Country, sometimes acting as pilot locomotives over the south Devon inclines. They also took over many services on the former Southern Railway routes in Devon and Cornwall.

Two more impressive new designs hit the rails in 1961. For top link main line services, Swindon produced the C-C D1000 'Western' series of 74 locomotives. These had the more powerful MD655 Maybach diesel engines. In Germany, the V200s (later renumbered 220s) were being supplemented by the V200.1s (later renumbered 221s). These also had these more powerful engines and were still B-B locomotives, while the new BR design was heavier and incorporated three-axle bogies, giving a total locomotive weight of 108 tons.

At 2,700bhp, the 'Westerns' were well capable of hauling the heavy expresses on the Paddington to Birmingham and Swansea routes. This class, later known as Class 52, also

D603 *Conquest* climbs Bruton incline with the up Torbay Express on October 10th, 1959.

On March 7th, 1963, BR green C-C 1004 *Western Crusader* pauses at Swindon depot. These 2,700bhp locomotives were the first diesel hydraulics that could out-perform the most powerful BR steam locomotives.

adopted a new body shape with curved sides that matched the profile of BR's Mark 1 carriages. They were big enough to have enough interior space for modifications such as the provision of dual braking, so when BR went over to air-braked Mark 2a stock, the '52s' could manage. They were not, however, fitted for electric train heating.

The other new design, introduced at about the same time, was Beyer Peacock's version of a diesel hydraulic Type 3, the 1,700bhp 'Hymek' series of B-Bs. These used the 16-cylinder MD870 version of the Maybach engine, coupled to Mekydro transmission. This combination was also in use in Germany on many of DB's class 216 to 218 series of B-Bs.

A pair of Type 2s, D6305 leading D6302, enters Lostwithiel with a summer Saturday express to Cornwall on a very wet July 23rd, 1960.

Among many other services, the 'Hymeks' were introduced on Paddington to Swansea expresses, something they were a bit small for, but which they gamely hauled until more powerful 'Westerns' and Class 47s became available. Living as I was on the Southern, I saw the 'Hymek' Type 3s on the Cardiff - Bristol - Portsmouth route as well as on inter-Regional services via Reading and Basingstoke to Bournemouth.

The 101 'Hymeks' were allocated to Cardiff Canton, Bristol Bath Road and Old Oak Common depots for maintenance. In most respects, they were an excellent addition to the WR fleet.

Around 1956, I was criticising the Western Region for, it seemed to me, being short-sighted enough to buy 200 0-6-0 pannier tank locomotives just when the future of steam seemed doomed. History has a tendency to repeat itself, otherwise, how can one explain the WR decision to order from Swindon Works a fleet of 56 0-6-0 diesel hydraulics less than 10 years later when railway rationalisation was proceeding apace? Delivered from 1964 to 1965, this design looked as if it were based on DB's class V60 shunting locomotives. It was intended for heavy shunting and freight transfer work, neither of which appeared to have much future. They were, not surprisingly, very short-lived in BR service; withdrawals began in 1968 and all were gone by the end of 1970! Happily, several were taken up by industrial concerns for work that better suited them. As well as five that were exported, 19 exist today in preservation because they are small enough and agile enough to be really useful on heritage lines.

Premature withdrawals

At BR headquarters M&EE level, the cost of overhauling and maintaining diesel hydraulic locomotives was emerging as significantly higher than that for equivalent diesel electric locomotives. This was put down to the more frequent need

to change engines and transmissions at depots between locomotive overhauls, and ship the items off to main works for repair and overhaul. In my own career, I worked on both the Western and Eastern Regions in the early-1970s, and can state that the ER's depot costs for diesel electric locomotives were well below those of the WR depots for equivalent work, so there were other factors in play as well.

The upshot of the Board's opinion was that diesel hydraulic locomotives were too expensive and had to be withdrawn quickly. Indeed, withdrawals of the B-B 'Warships' began in 1968 and they were all gone by late 1971. Two are preserved.

Withdrawal of the popular 'Hymeks' began in 1971 and was finished by the end of 1975. Four of these are preserved. The D6300 Type 2s all went between 1967 and 1972. None is preserved. The 'Westerns' went between 1973 and 1977, though seven of these were retained for preservation.

The 'Warships' and 'Westerns' were replaced mainly by Classes 47 and 50 diesel electrics and the 'Hymeks' and Type 2s by Classes 37 and 25.

As far as I am aware, none of the diesel hydraulics received revised numbers based on BR's TOPS scheme in the early-1970s, though several did receive the BR rail blue livery.

A 'might have been'

I have written before in TRACTION magazine about my belief that BR lost an opportunity when it decided to withdraw the 74 examples of Class 52. If these locomotives had been modified with slow-speed control equipment similar to that fitted to some 47s, 37s and 20s for use on MGR coal trains, they could have been redirected onto that type of work, which would have reduced substantially the stresses their equipment received when compared with working 100mph expresses; as a result I would have expected their maintenance costs to have come down usefully. Such a move would have enabled BR to order 74 fewer new Class 56s. That would have been a big saving in capital outlay.

The bumblebee story

At the beginning, I mentioned the heavy weight of the early diesel electric Type 4s and how that was a limitation. I recall watching a Class 40 climbing Shap near Scout Green with a heavy express and noticing how it was then down to about 25mph.

More significantly, one sunny day in the early-1980s, I was eating lunch in the restaurant car in an eight-coach Glasgow to Inverness train. We were climbing slowly up to Slochd summit with a Class 40 prattling away at the front. I looked out of the window alongside me, and outside was a bumblebee overtaking us! I kid you not.

'Hymek' B-B D7045 approaches the then- new station at Southampton Airport with an inter-Regional freight. The headcode 2F27 is for a WR local passenger train, inappropriate for this working!

BR's last diesel hydraulic locomotive to be delivered, in 1965, 0-6-0 No. D9555, rests at Cardiff Canton in 1970, after withdrawal. My question remains: why were they ordered at all?

On the Southern Region, passing Eastleigh in 1969 with a Bournemouth to Birmingham New Street inter-Regional train is 'Hymek' Type 3 B-B No. D7065.

ELECTRICS NORTH OF CARLISLE

In Traction 301, **Gavin Morrison** presented some of his images of diesel-hauled trains north of Carlisle on the line over Beattock. This time, it is the turn of the electrics...

The West Coast Main Line in Inter City days at its best! No. 87035 heads down into the Clyde valley near Crawford with the 10:25 Euston to Glasgow on September 23rd, 1992.

MAIN IMAGE: There has clearly been a scattering of snow on the hills as RES-liveried No. 86261 brings a northbound train past Aningdon on December 3rd, 1992. Judging by the rolling stock, the train is probably a Cross Country working from the Midlands or West of England to Glasgow.

COVER CAPTION: No. 86236 is seen heading south on the climb up the Clyde Valley with the 15:55 Edinburgh to London Paddington on September 23rd, 1992. This train ran via Birmingham, Oxford and Reading to Paddington.

Wearing the distinctive livery of Virgin Trains, No. 90009 storms through Lockerbie station with the 06:30 Euston to Glasgow on May 2nd, 2002.

On September 22nd, 1988, No. 85035 passes the loops at Beattock with the 08:33 1S64 Paignton to Glasgow and is viewed from the bridge at the north end. The catering vehicle in the middle of the train stands out as it has just been repainted in the new InterCity colours.

While the 'Pendolinos' still form the backbone of passenger services over Beattock, they no longer wear the eye-catching Virgin Trains livery, which stood out so well in both urban and rural surroundings. Here we see No. 390031 heading north through Crawford on September 6th, 2005.

No. 85022 has passed the summit and is bringing its northbound cement train down from the summit, and is seen just south of Crawford village on June 7th, 1988. The infant River Clyde is just out of view on the left.

No. 86419 heads the 16:18 Glasgow to Bristol mail train uphill past Abington on September 23rd, 1992.

A pair of Class 86s Nos. 86608 and 86622 are seen with a southbound Freightliner container train on the northern approach to Beattock Summit at Crawford on September 23rd, 1992.

Revolution trains

N gauge - 1:148 scale

59001 at Basingstoke with Yeoman PTA wagons. Photo: Paul Smith/Creative Commons.

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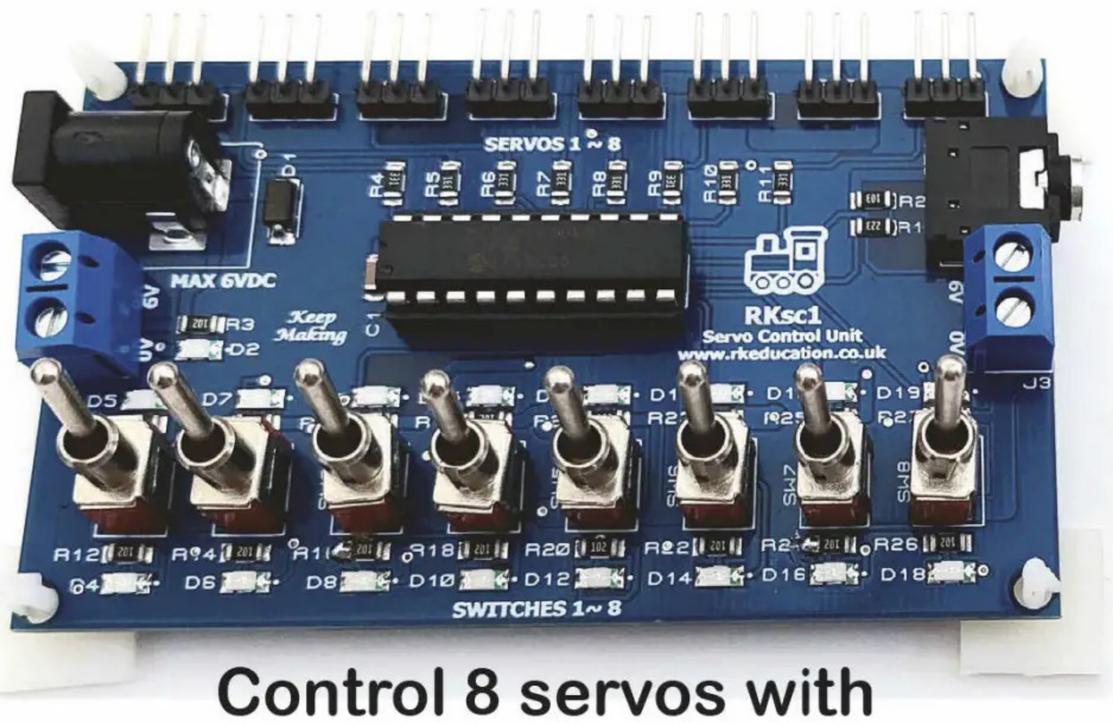

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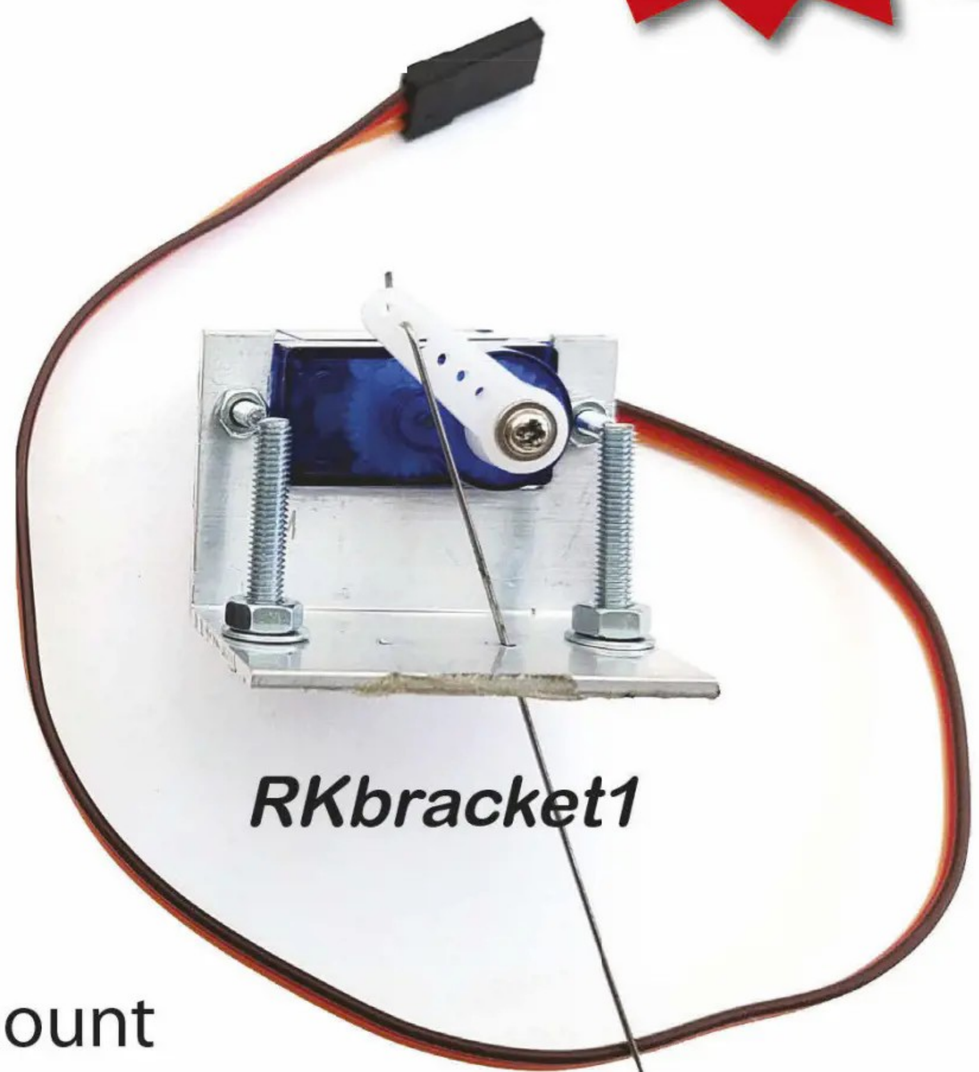

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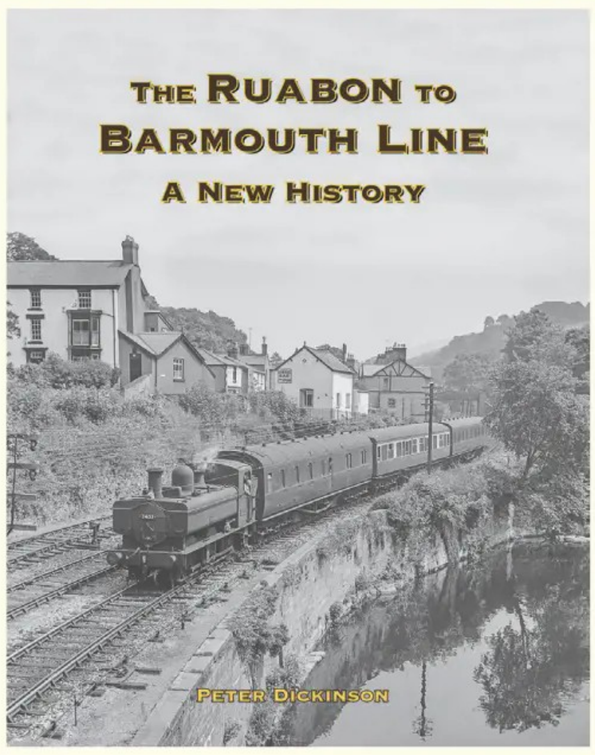

THE RUABON TO BARMOUTH LINE
A NEW HISTORY – PETER DICKINSON

For nearly 100 years, passengers could enjoy arguably one of the finest journeys in the British Isles from the comfort of their railway carriage. The Great Western Railway described the journey from Ruabon to Barmouth as 'a paradise for artists and fishermen and a country rich in mountain streams, wild woods and wide far views, unbeaten in any part of Wales'. The 54-mile route carried generations of holidaymakers to the beaches of the Cambrian Coast, as well as providing a vital lifeline to the rural communities it served. Branching away from the Chester to Shrewsbury route just south of Ruabon, the railway served the historic towns of Llangollen, Corwen, Bala and Dolgellau, before reaching the famous Barmouth Bridge and the holiday resort of Barmouth. It was a line of contrasts, from the industrial environs of Ruabon in the east, to the rugged coastline in the west. It was also busy with holidaymakers and tourists during the summer months, but painfully quiet during the winter. The story of the Ruabon to Barmouth line begins in the mid-19th century when the townsfolk of Llangollen longed for a connection to the rapidly-expanding railway network. The Vale of Llangollen Railway Company opened a 5-mile branch to passenger traffic in 1863, promoted by the Great Western Railway who leapt at the opportunity to tap deeper into North Wales. Over the next decade, the railway extended ever westwards until it reached the county town of Dolgellau and the metals of the rival Cambrian Railway. The uneasy relationship between the two railway companies continued into the 20th century and was only ended through the Cambrian's amalgamation in the 1920s. Two sections of the Ruabon to Barmouth line have reopened as heritage railways; meaning that the sylvan beauty of the Dee Valley can once again be enjoyed from the carriage window on the Llangollen Railway, and the lapping waters and rugged shoreline of Llyn Tegid on the Bala Lake Railway. The author, who has been closely associated with the preserved Llangollen Railway for many years, has produced a detailed account of the Ruabon to Barmouth line's history, looking at all aspects of its traffic and operation form the earliest days right up to closure. The stories of the preserved Llangollen Railway and Bala Lake Railway have been well documented, so no attempt has been made to take this story on beyond track lifting in 1969. The book is illustrated with a wealth of photographs, the majority of which have not previously been published, as well as many items of paperwork from the author's own archives. **DUE END OF SEPTEMBER**

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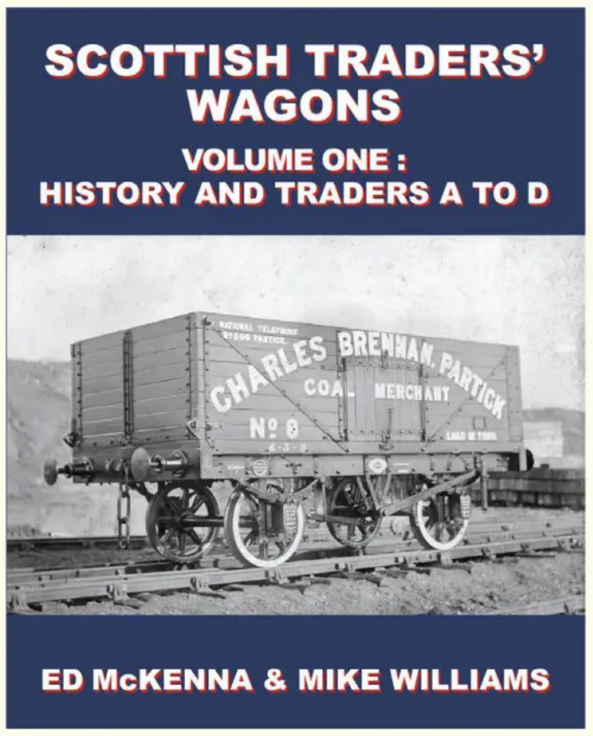
SCOTTISH TRADERS WAGONS
VOLUME ONE: HISTORY AND TRADERS A TO D
ED McKENNA & MIKE WILLIAMS

Over 50,000 traders' wagons were registered by the Scottish railway companies post-1889, and many more built prior to registration remained in traffic into the 20th Century. In this and two forthcoming volumes an attempt has been made to identify every Scottish user of traders' wagons in the period c1845 to 1948. This volume opens with general information about the Scottish traders, their often-fraught relationship with the railway companies and the legal and regulatory context under which they operated, which differed from elsewhere in the UK. The next chapter provides information about the builders who supplied the wagons, sources of finance, the geographical distribution of the wagons and their use. The wagons registered with each Scottish railway company are then discussed up to the Grouping in 1923 and through to nationalisation. The third chapter gives technical information on the wagons themselves from the earliest days through to the specifications published by the Railway Clearing House (RCH). It reveals that the Caledonian and North British issued their own 'approved designs' in lieu of the first specification and highlights some details which mark out a wagon as built for a Scottish trader. The remaining four chapters begin an alphabetical directory of traders, which will continue over the other two volumes. Coal merchants ranged from local one-man, and sometimes one-woman, bands to large concerns owning many wagons and trading from multiple locations. Wagon hire was a particular characteristic of this group, which meant that a wagon could carry up to three or sometimes more liveries during its working life. Coal and ironmasters owned collieries, iron ore deposits and blast furnaces, and they often exported coal. Their wagon fleets were larger; the Fife Coal Company, the biggest of them all, owned more than 7,000 wagons over the years as a result of business takeovers. The directory also deals with papermakers, textile manufacturers, oil and chemical traders, brewers and distillers, as well as municipal undertakings such as gasworks and quarries. Finally, a comprehensive list of primary source material is provided, in the hope that others may be stimulated to research this fascinating and very complicated subject. **DUE END OF SEPTEMBER**



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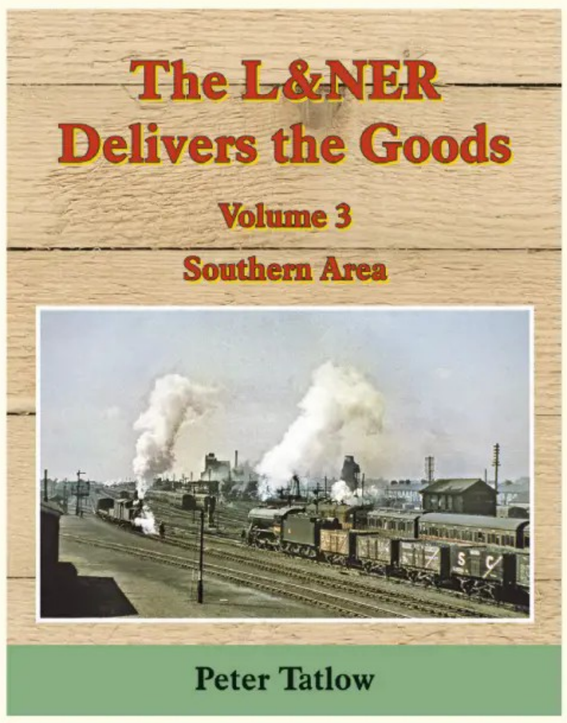

Concluding Peter Tatlow's pioneering trilogy on the goods business of the L&NER. The conveyance of mundane goods traffic was the source of almost two-thirds of its total income, around twice that of the more glamorous job of carrying passengers and their luggage. This respected author sets the record straight by describing how the L&NER served the nation by delivering the goods and minerals entrusted to it. In this final volume, his attention is directed towards the description of goods activities in the L&NER's Southern Area during its existence (1923-1949). This was an era without motorways, HGVs loaded with ISO containers or centrally generated electricity – a time before oil and gas from the North Sea resulted in the demise of the numerous humble steam-hauled goods trains.

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CHARLES ROBERTS & COMPANY
1856-2005 AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY
Chris Sambrook

As an ambitious twenty-four year old joiner from the most humble of beginnings Charles Roberts established a small workshop in Ings Road, Wakefield to manufacture railway wagons. Over the years his business grew, moving less than twenty years later to much larger premises at Horbury. The new factory became a major employer in the area, producing railway wagons and coaches as well as lorry and bus bodies. After his death the company continued producing rail vehicles for Great Britain and export markets on a massive scale, together with making a huge contribution to the war effort in two world wars. This is the story of Charles Roberts, the man, his factories, and their output and those who followed in his footsteps making a huge impact on the town of Horbury, the county of Yorkshire and the thousands of men and women who worked there through the years over nearly a century and a half.

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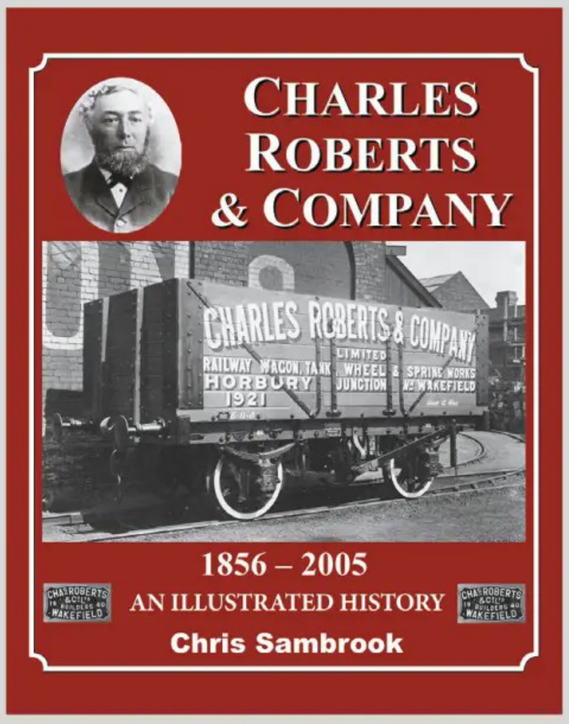

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A BIG DONATION

I'm sure few of us can forget the vandalism attack on the Market Deeping Model Railway Exhibition in 2019, which resulted in an outcry from the modelling community, with donations flooding in from every corner of the UK. Here is the story of the first donation, which has left a lasting legacy.

Words: Peter Davies and Steve Rouse **Photography:** Phil Parker

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FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Mitchell Junction
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/OO & /9mm gauge/OO9
SIZE: 12ft x 6ft
ERA/REGION: Modern day/heritage
LAYOUT TYPE: Continuous run

TOP RIGHT: A view from behind the level crossing barrier, looking towards the brewery. Bachmann Mainline Hunslet *Charles* hauls a rake of Peco slate wagons.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Modern freight. A DRS Class 66 heads a container train passing Mitchell Primary School and an eastbound TTA tanker train.

BELOW: The pinnacle of DCC sound. The excellent Hornby Flirt and Bachmann Mainline Hunslet sound files offer a huge range of fun, playable sounds and features for our young visitors to discover and activate.

As folk may know, our club has always had a layout for youngsters to operate. 'Knowle End' enabled operation by two youngsters at a time. However, it was heavily vandalised (along with its stock) in the 2019 vandal attack and was so badly damaged that it could not be rescued.

Immediately after the disaster, Mike Mitchell contacted me. His wife had died a few years earlier of cancer and now he too had the disease and explained that he didn't have long to live and wanted to leave his layout and stock collection to the club.

The layout was huge, measuring well over six metres by five, at least one metre wide and multi-tracked! As a former carpenter, Mike had built sturdy baseboard supports, which was just as well because I had to climb on top to remove everything! With great care, track was lifted, buildings and stock were carefully packed and tools stored in boxes for transport. It was a complete car full, even without the baseboards, which we had no option but to leave behind. It was the club's first donation of items after the disaster.

> "As a nod to its predecessor, elements of 'Knowle End' that had survived would also be incorporated; namely the farmhouse diorama and buildings."

The question was, what would it all be used for? A replacement for the vandalised 'Knowle End' seemed to be the main requirement at the time. Before Mike passed away, I was able to contact him again and seek his permission for his name to be used on a layout for youngsters to operate. He was delighted to give that permission. 'Mitchell Junction' was born.

The brief agreed, the new layout would:

- Be DCC-operated and could be controlled by mobile phone or tablet
- Built to exhibition standard and look like any other layout in a show and not have the appearance that it is aimed at children.
- Have the capability of several visitors operating different locos at the same time
- Both mainline (00) and heritage line (009) operation on a roundy-roundy layout.
- As a nod to its predecessor, elements of 'Knowle End' that had survived would also be incorporated, namely the farmhouse diorama and buildings.

A new home

The original concept (4 x 2'x6' baseboards forming a solid rectangle) was planned using AnyRail and the baseboards constructed. The track was partially laid, but with the confines of our former clubroom and other layout space, only a couple of baseboards were ever together. The build then came to a dramatic and elongated halt due to Covid and the club's search and fitting out of new premises.

ABOVE: *Linda* hauls a passenger train past the restored Knowle End farm. The addition of the modern mobile phone mast on top of the hill tells you this is not a scene from the 1960s.

MIDDLE LEFT: Bringing the layout to life by adding little scenes. Jeff and Reginald stand proudly in front of their restored 1971 Morris Minor van against the backdrop of the brewery.

BOTTOM LEFT: The level crossing, which also goes over the 00 main lines, was made using plastic card topped with Gaugemaster self-adhesive tarmac. Barriers are Train-Tech/ Peco.

Roll on a couple of years and, in the new clubroom, the baseboards could finally be erected and track laying recommence. In the meantime, MDMRC had attracted a growing membership and new members joined the build team and made some very interesting observations and suggestions. This resulted in the expansion of the layout and the decision to build a modern era layout with heritage line. With the need to accommodate the longer trains of the modern era, stations required elongation and curves were altered. Track was lifted and four more baseboards inserted before the revised trackplan became a reality.

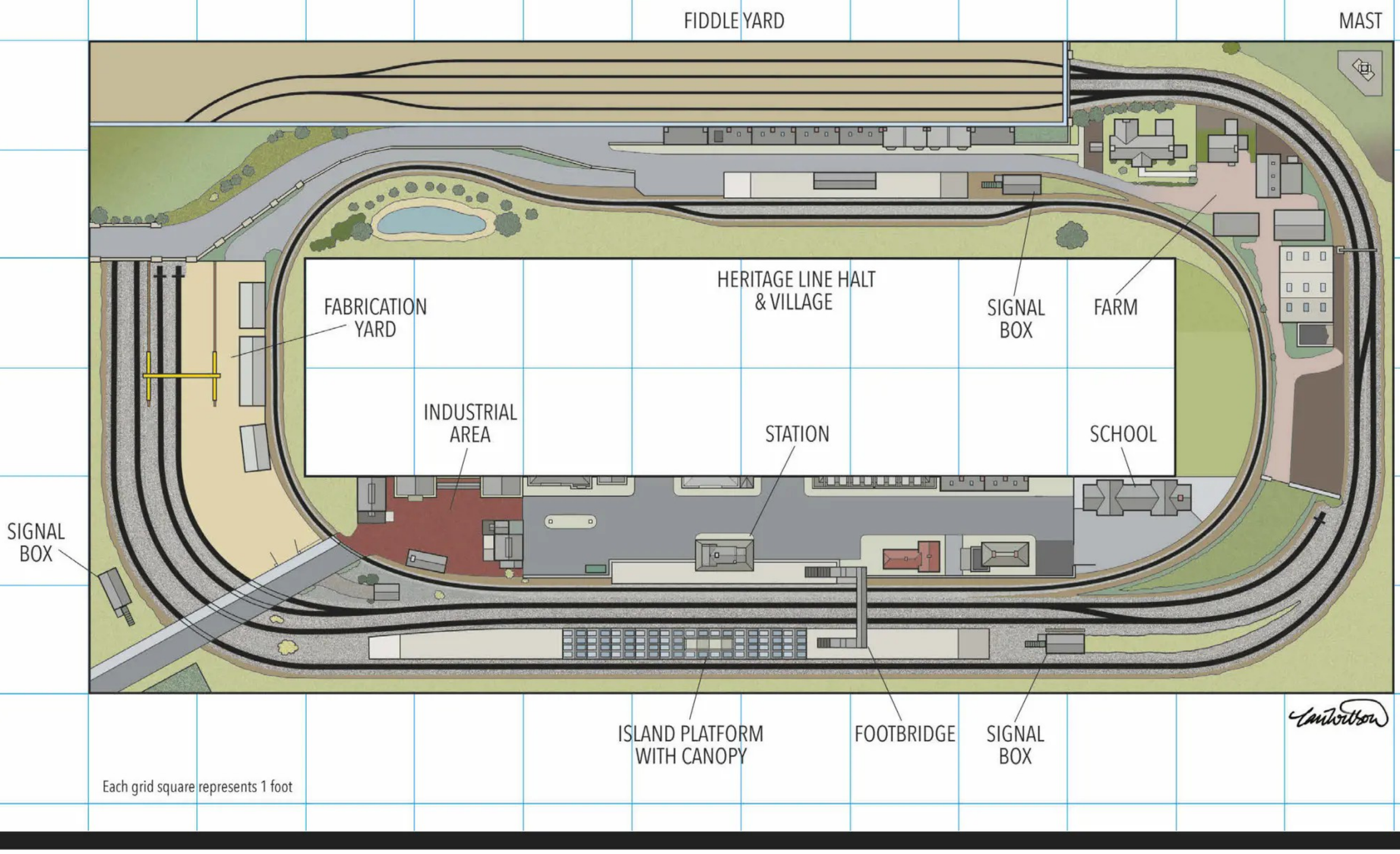
A key feature to enhance the playability and fun in operating the layout is the addition of DCC sound to all the trains being run. The disadvantage of this, and DCC in general, is having to know or explain to users loco/accessory addresses and function buttons. A donation to the club last year of an ESU ECoS controller removed those issues in one stroke. No need to remember any numbers, locos can be selected from a roster and routes (points and signals) selected from a map. This has made it ideal for visitors to operate, with children quickly getting to grips with the control and sound icons. The addition of an access point (wireless control link) has enabled the connection of mobile phones and/or tablets using the Engine Driver or Train Controller apps.

TOP LEFT:
Looking across from the main line platforms to the heritage railway platform and station building. The building lights can be individually controlled by DCC through our Cobalt Alpha Mimic kit.

MIDDLE LEFT:
Linda passes Mickleton pond, a popular local spot with picnic benches and an ice cream van (just out of shot to the right).

BOTTOM RIGHT:
Mickleton Halt on the heritage line provides a passing loop for the narrow gauge trains. You can also see the Mickleton Village high street behind.

TRACKPLAN



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Matthew Bumphrey, Aileen Frisby, Bill Sowerby, Mick Quin, James Heliwell, Augy Harrison, Steve Rouse and Junior members Harry and Toby.

Meet the team

While some members have worked on the layout throughout its build, others have joined and/or departed during its construction. However, throughout the build, for most of the team, this is the first club/exhibition layout they have worked on. As required, advice and support has been provided from experienced club members, including Mick Quinn and Bill Sowerby. Throughout the latter stages of development, encouraged by Augy Harrison, the Youth members regularly made use of the layout as an additional running track for their Thursday club evenings. They fed back useful observations of how the layout was performing, which the team then addressed. Some younger members have also worked with the build team when developing the scenery and have made suggestions for future developments.

Four people can operate locos at the same time, with two main line tracks, a shunting capability to the steel yard, as well as the 009 heritage loop. We have also set up a TV monitor above the layout to mirror the ECoS Control so visitors (and parents) can see how the trains are being driven. Sound decoders are either factory-fitted or the Hornby HM7000 decoders, but these tend to be run via DCC rather than the Bluetooth option. Street, building and crossing lights are also DCC-controlled.

Scenic touches

Most buildings have been recycled or were donated to the club as kits or previously built. Several have been modified with the school "Mitchell C of E Primary Academy" being a renamed station building, along with school-based posters and green fencing hiding its former identity. The farm buildings were salvaged from 'Knowle End' and form a new diorama with the addition of liquid mud for the farm track and 'ground coffee soil' for the planted field. The brewery and warehouses have been enhanced by the cobbled street, created by painstakingly pressing a pen lid into air-dry clay.

> "A key feature to enhance the playability and fun in operating the layout is the addition of DCC sound to all the trains being run."

There is a Steel Stockholders and Fabrication Yard, the buildings of which were scratch-built, separated from the town and Brewery by a level crossing. This industrial area is another focal point of the layout. The tunnel into the hill behind it disguises the entrance to the layout's fiddle yard. On the opposite side of the layout, the radio/phone mast provides a further eye-catching feature. To the rear of the layout is the Mickelton Halt 009 station and village, which has a pond, picnic area and a small high street, leading eventually to the farm.

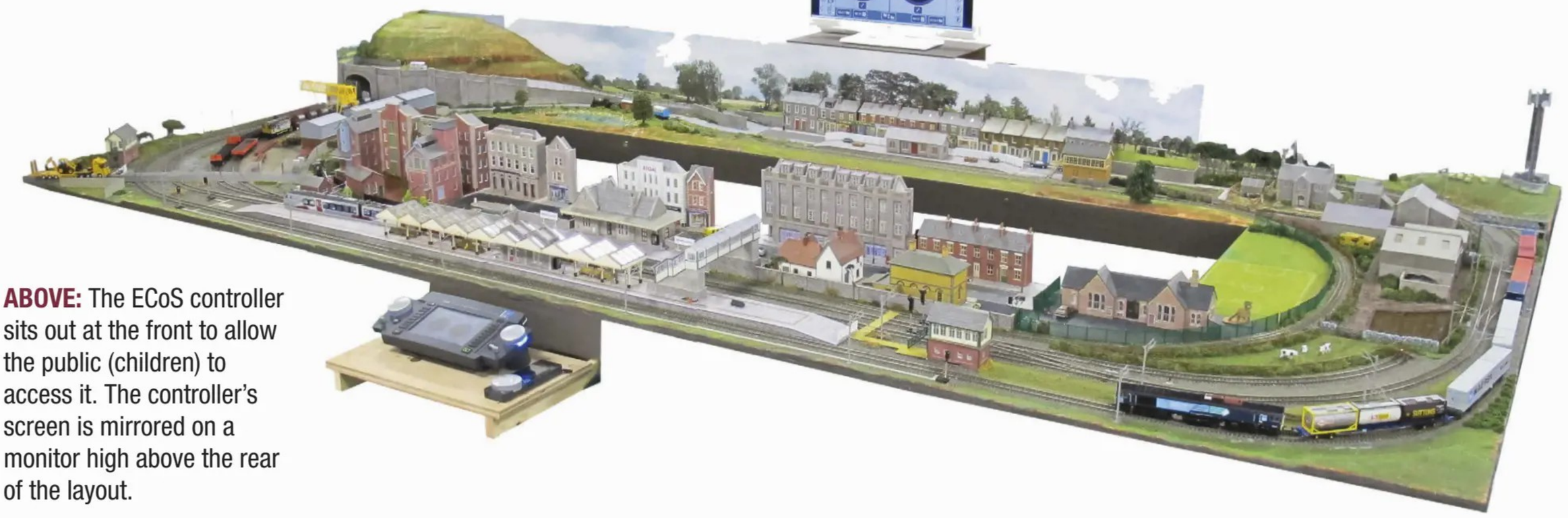
Mixed stock

Rolling stock is a mix of donated items and club purchases. The OO9 is operated by a pair of Mainline Hunsletts. The OO is frequented by Classes 37, 66, 67, 68, 90 and 91. Multiple units are a Class 43-powered HST set (Virgin Cross Country) and a Class 155 single-car unit. At shows, these have been supplemented by a club member's Class 800 Azuma and a Class 755 Flirt. The team is keen to keep the stock bang up to date, so young visitors can relate to the trains they are operating.

ABOVE 68 016 *Vigilant* hauls a block train of BP TTA tankers past the barn before entering the fiddle yard.

MIDDLE LEFT: A low loader negotiates the level crossing in front of the steel stockholders' yard (right), while a Lincoln-bound Azuma patiently awaits signal clearance and the right away.

BOTTOM LEFT: 08 834 gets ready to move a VTG Ferrywagon, BYA and an SPA in the steel stockholders' yard. The buildings were scratch-built using Wills scenic card. The crane is from Gaugemaster.



ABOVE: The ECoS controller sits out at the front to allow the public (children) to access it. The controller's screen is mirrored on a monitor high above the rear of the layout.

TOP RIGHT:
Freight trains pass the silage heap and vegetable patch. The tilled soil effect was achieved using coffee grounds.

MIDDLE RIGHT:
The mobile phone mast was an Ebay purchase. The cantilevered signal gantry above was scratch-built using a Dapol kit and a signal head from Train-Tech.

BELOW:
Looking across from the station car park to the main platforms, we have relied heavily on the excellent Metcalfe kits to populate 'Mitchell Junction', including the station building, canopies and footbridge in this view.

Steam is not forgotten, with A1 *Flying Scotsman* and A4 *Gadwall* available to make appearances.

The team is now considering finer detailed scenic additions to the layout, which visitors will be able to control via DCC or push buttons. In future, when crawling under the layout to finish odd jobs becomes less frequent, the aim is to lower the height of the layout so that smaller and disabled visitors can more easily enjoy without the use of a step.

A lasting tribute

Mike Mitchell was not only the first donor of railway modelling items after our disaster, but enabled a layout to be constructed with capability well beyond its original intentions. Though much has been added to the original donation (including other donated ECOS control equipment and new stock), a team ably led by Augy Harrison has built the layout. 'Mitchell Junction' is a DCC layout with sound-equipped stock, phased lighting and much else besides. It is a layout that Mike himself would have been delighted to use with youngsters, especially since it enables three to operate it at once, using tablets or mobile phones.

Rest in peace Mike Mitchell, and thank you very much. ■

“Steam is not forgotten, with A1 *Flying Scotsman* and A4 *Gadwall* available to make appearances.”

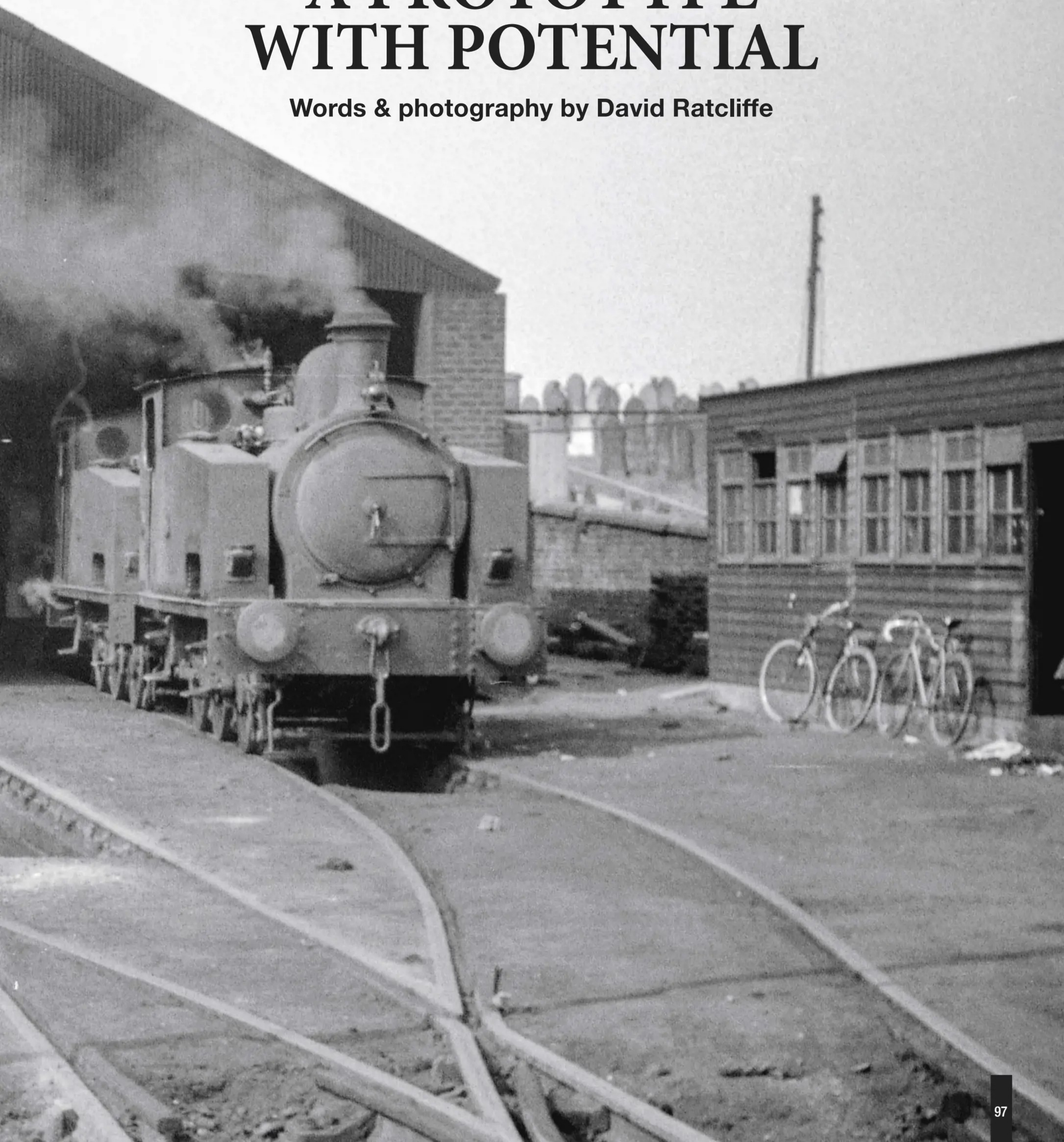
PROTOTYPE

Four of the MSC's Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T 'Long Tanks', including MSC No. 62, w/n HC1060 built 1914, are pictured at Mode Wheel running shed in April 1960. From right to left, the three shed tracks were know as 'Cemetery Road', 'Middle Road', and 'Sandhole Road', the original sand drying furnace being alongside the outer wall.

MODE WHEEL WORKS

A PROTOTYPE WITH POTENTIAL

Words & photography by David Ratcliffe



PROTOTYPE

MSC Nos. 39 and 69, w/ns HC740 and HC1430, together with a Sentinel 4wDH and two Hudswell Clarke diesels in the works yard at Mode Wheel during May 1964. Also seen are a BR 16-ton Mineral wagon, the depot receiving no more than two or three loads of coal a week at this date, together with MSC 10-ton Flat 4049 and an MSC 12-ton Open loaded with ash.

One of the MSC's seven Kitson 0-6-0Ts No. 72, w/n K5357 built 1921, stands over on the 'Middle Road' at Mode Wheel shed in April 1960. The Kitsons had been purchased between 1904 and 1929, primarily to work trains along the MSC's 'through line', which ran alongside the north bank of the canal from Partington to Salford. No. 72 would be scrapped in 1964.

Major repairs to the Manchester Ship Canal Co.'s large wagon fleet were undertaken at Mode Wheel works. These included a bath of two dozen seven-plank drop door opens allocated to the Engineer's Department to carry ballast, with No. 218 recorded down the line near Irlam in September 1968.

Motive power depots are popular prototypes for model layouts, offering the chance to display a good-size loco collection within a reasonably limited space. Most common are those based on main line locations, but some of the private industrial systems had their own interesting facilities such as Gretton Brook shed, which served the Corby ironstone lines operated by Stewarts & Lloyds, and the Mode Wheel workshops and shed of the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

In addition to building the 36-mile-long waterway, which opened in 1894, the Manchester Ship Canal Co. also operated its own extensive railway that not only served the docks at Salford, Manchester, Runcorn and Ellesmere Port, but also provided rail access for many of the industrial premises, which came to be established alongside the banks of the canal in the succeeding years.

The MSC railway also served the varied industries that were situated in Trafford Park, the world's first industrial estate, which was developed immediately to the south of Salford Docks from the late-1890s, and by 1923, the MSC Co. had the largest industrial rail system in the country with more than 230 miles of track and over 70 steam locomotives.

To service its locomotive fleet, the MSC had sheds at Ellesmere Port, close to the western end of the canal, Latchford, near Warrington, and at Partington about 12 miles west of Manchester. There was also a small shed at Salford No. 9 Dock, but its main loco facilities were at Mode Wheel, on the north side of the canal in Salford, where a three-road locomotive shed and associated workshops were opened in 1900.

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BELOW: In March 1958, Hudswell Clarke 'Short Tank' No. 35 heads down the line from Salford to Partington with Cashier's Coach No.2, a former Midland Railway Brake vehicle, which the Manchester Ship Canal Co. had purchased from the Central Wagon Co. in 1953. After being modified and repainted in the Engineer's Department livery of red oxide, the coach, conveying the company cashier, his assistant and a police escort, was then used to carry the wages for the canal company's staff employed between Mode Wheel and Latchford.

This replaced a much smaller shed, built at Trafford Wharf in 1895, and in addition to its running shed, a large machine and fitting shop was also located at Mode Wheel, together with boiler, paint, pattern, joinery and chain shops, as well as a smithy, tinsmiths and electricians. There was also a large wagon shop where the MSC's own extensive fleet of rolling stock, which included opens, vans and flat wagons, was maintained.

A long stores building, with offices and staff canteen above, could be found running alongside the machine shop, while from the outset the various workshops at Mode Wheel were equipped with the latest heavy-duty machine tools, and so were able to handle all repairs and overhauls required by the company's locomotives and rolling stock.

There were nine workshop sidings at Mode Wheel and, as well as deliveries of coal and later diesel fuel for the locomotives, the depot also received wagons carrying miscellaneous spares and equipment in addition to those sent there for repair. Aside from the inbound coal and diesel, which arrived in railway-owned mineral wagons and Esso tank wagons respectively, the rest of this traffic was carried in the MSC's own wagons, this included the disposal of ash. Mode Wheel was also the base for one of the MSC's two breakdown trains, each of which being formed of two ex-GWR Toad Brake Vans modified for their new role.

Prior to the Second World War, Mode Wheel had an allocation of almost 60 locomotives, comprising mostly Hudswell Clarke and Hunslet 0-6-0Ts but also including a couple of Peckett 0-4-0ST, but by the late-1940s, rail traffic on the system had begun to fall. Even so, in the late-1950s, there was still sufficient to warrant the MSC Co. to begin to replace its steam fleet with diesels, and Mode

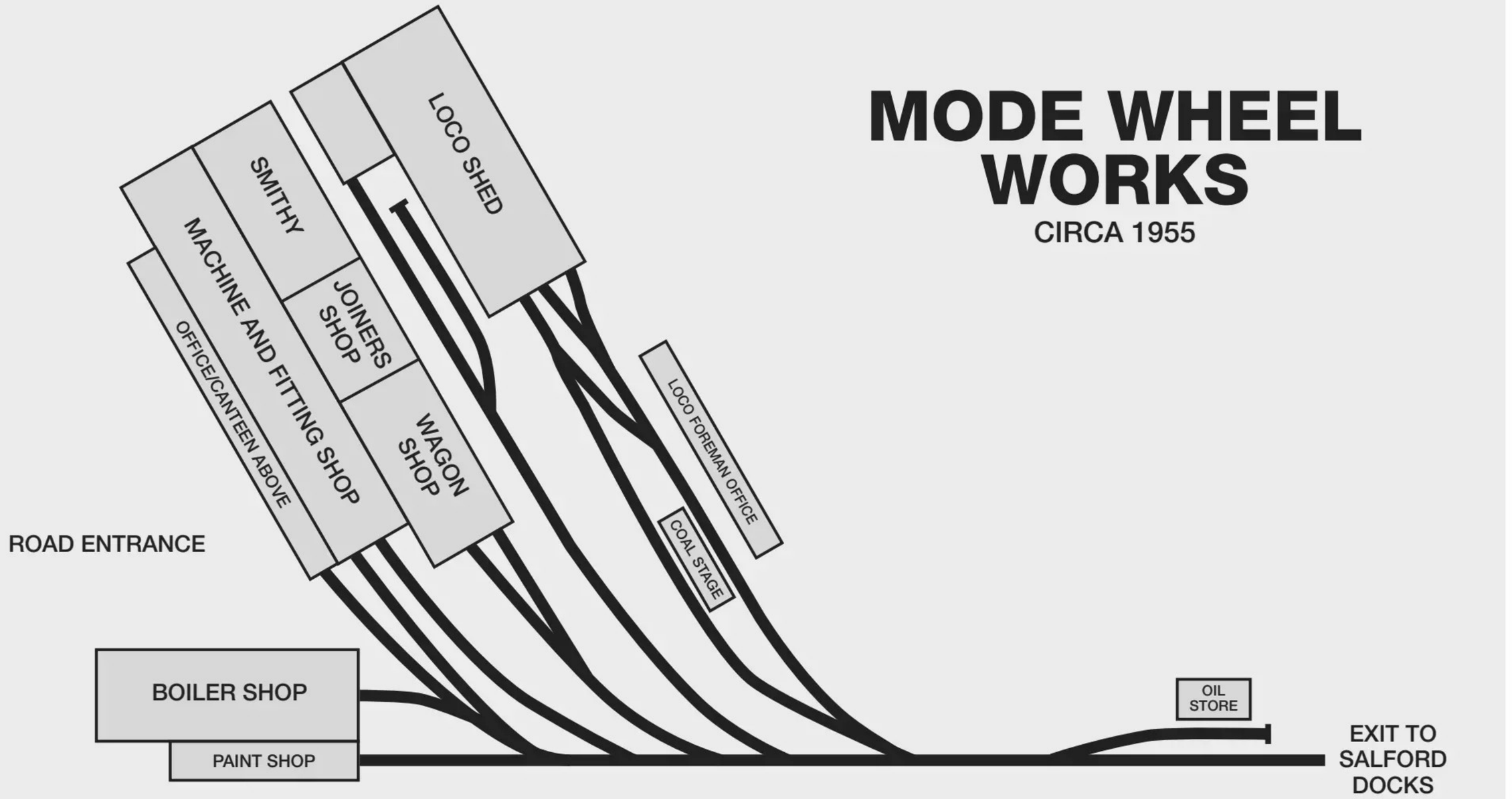
Although all five MSC 325bhp 0-6-0DH Sentinels were based at Ellesmere Port, they would occasionally appear at Mode Wheel for maintenance. Positioned between a pair of Matterson 16-ton electric lifting units, No. 3005, w/n S10162 of 1963, receives a major overhaul at Mode Wheel in September 1983.

Wheel was still home to some 44 steam and eight diesel locomotives in summer 1961. Over the next five years, though, as the MSC purchased additional diesels, the number of active steam locomotives fell, with the last, a Hudswell Clarke 'Long Tank' No. 67, being withdrawn from revenue service in June 1966. During this period, a new loco sand dryer and dispensing hopper had been installed at Mode Wheel, but the running shed ceased to be used other than for storing withdrawn stock, the diesels being stabled in the open on the workshop tracks.

A weekend visit to Mode Wheel in April 1980 finds a packed works yard with four of the company's 204 bhp Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0DMs, including D3, D12 and D14, in company with two of their remaining 4wDH Sentinels and 430 bhp Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0DE locomotive No. 4001 stabled in front of the paint and boiler shops. To the right, a corner of the machine shop can be seen, with the stores and office building behind.

MODE WHEEL WORKS

CIRCA 1955



Trackplan for the Mode Wheel Works - Circa 1955.

Following the withdrawal of the steam locomotives, the boiler shop, which had been rebuilt in the 1950s, took on plate work for other departments while Mode Wheel also handled other non-rail jobs such as fabricating new lock gates and repairing dredger buckets.

Unfortunately, shipping traffic along the canal would decline dramatically during the mid-1960s, and the company's diminishing fortunes were reflected in further falls in tonnage on its rail system. Consequently, most rail traffic at Salford and Manchester Docks ceased in 1972, with almost all of the MSC's wagon fleet then being withdrawn.

Furthermore, 20 of the MSC's fleet of 40 still relatively new diesels, six of which having only been purchased in 1966, were then either sold or stored, many in the now roofless running shed.

The Ship Canal Co's other 20 diesels were then split among Ellesmere Port (5), Partington (3), with a dozen now based at Mode Wheel to handle the remaining traffic within Trafford Park and along the MSC's Barton Dock branch, as well as the shunting still required on the north side of the canal in Salford at Irwell Park Wharf, Springfield Warehousing and the Lancashire Tar Distillers oil terminal at Weaste.

These included the MSC's pair of 430bhp Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 diesel electrics, which had first arrived at Mode Wheel in 1959, along with seven 204bhp Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 diesel mechanicals and three 4wDH diesel hydraulic Sentinels. The Sentinels were modified in 1972 to be able to operate in multiple with each other.

However, the MSC railway suffered a further blow when Swing Bridge No.2, which was situated just east of Salford No.6 Dock and linked the remaining lines on the north of the canal with those in Trafford Park, was closed in October 1981. This severed the direct connection to Mode Wheel, and as a result, the following year the MSC Co. opened a small new shed part-way along its Barton Dock branch at Park Road. This then became the base for the four or five diesels required for the remaining traffic at Barton Dock and Trafford Park, with the three or four locomotives still needed on the north side at Salford continuing to be based at Mode Wheel.

Mode Wheel also continued to undertake any major overhauls required by the diesels from the MSC's other remaining sheds at Ellesmere Port, Partington, and Barton Dock, although these now arrived at Mode Wheel on the back of a road low-loader. However, the MSC would subsequently open yet another small diesel shed, this one next to the oil terminal at Weaste, and the increasingly dilapidated Mode Wheel works finally closed in 1988. ■

In the late 1940s, the MSC adopted a revised locomotive livery of light grey with black and white lining, although within a decade, the company had reverted to its more practical dark grey. After being withdrawn by the MSC in 1966, the following year No. 67 was preserved at the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, before later being transferred to the Middleton Rly. where it was recorded heading a demonstration goods train in September 2002.

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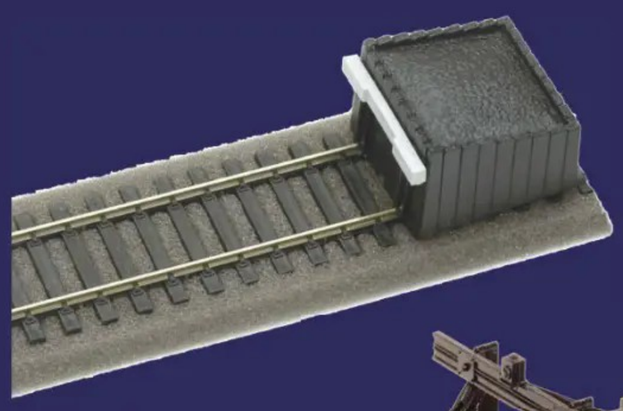

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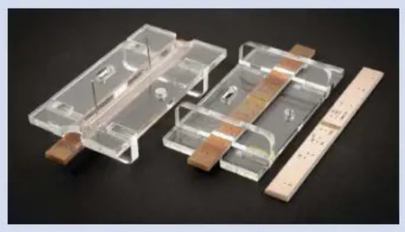

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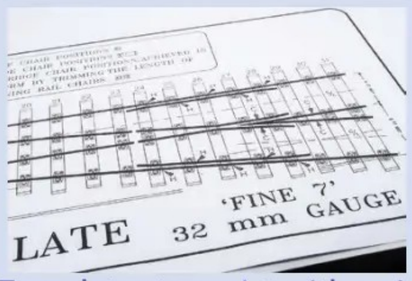

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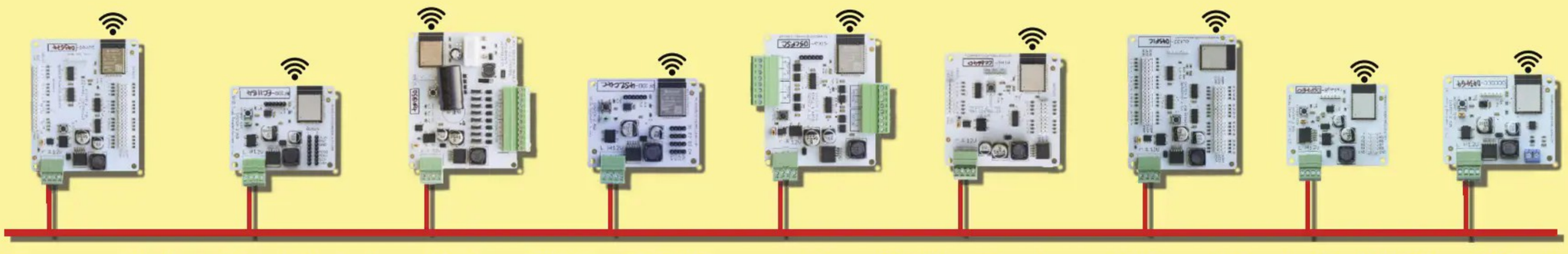

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THE LATEST HEADLINES

Bachmann announces upgraded Class 47

Bachmann Europe has revealed a series of enhancements to its OO gauge Branchline Class 47 ahead of a new production run scheduled for delivery in the first half of 2026.

The Bachmann Branchline Class 47 first appeared in 2021 and marked a significant step forward for diesel-outline models in OO scale. The 2026 release will see this tooling updated with a number of new features, including some technology previously reserved for other parts of Bachmann's range.

Among the key updates is the addition of Bachmann's Auto-Release Coupling system, enabling hands-free uncoupling via DCC. This will now be fitted as standard to the Class 47 for the first time.

The models will also be supplied with the BachUp Stay Alive system pre-installed. Designed to provide consistent power to the decoder and lighting, this feature is intended to reduce the risk of stalling or momentary power loss on DCC layouts.

Sound-fitted and Sound-Fitted Deluxe versions will benefit from a new Dual Fitted XL speaker system. This includes two speakers – one of which is a bass-enhanced TangBand unit with passive radiator – and is used in conjunction with the ESU Loksound V5 DCC decoder.

In terms of detailing, Bachmann has refined the cab windscreen glazing, aiming for a better fit and improved appearance. A newly-designed snowplough is also being introduced. This now attaches directly to the chassis for improved stability and realism on curves, and crucially, allows the buffer beam detail to remain in place when fitted.

Despite the added features, the recommended retail price remains £239.95 for the standard model. Production is set to begin shortly, with models expected to reach retailers in the first half of 2026.

Further information is expected during Bachmann's Winter 2025 announcements on November 5th, which are also likely to include additional liveries and tooling options.

Current liveries announced:

- Class 47/0 - 47226 - BR Blue
- Class 47/0 - 47238 - BR Blue
- Class 47/0 - 47280 - BR Railfreight Grey
- Class 47/7 - 49981 - VSOE Rail Express Systems
- Class 47/4 - 47826 - WCRC Maroon

Rails announces Rails Bespoke

Celebrating 55 years in business, Rails of Sheffield has announced Rails Bespoke, a new service that plans to take the world of dirty modelling to even more realistic levels.

With a highly experienced team joining and high-tech facilities being finished, further announcements are expected on the Rails website and social media.

Initially, the plan was announced as a takeover of Olivia's Trains, who for many years has been delivering this service, however, Rails reported that circumstances had changed and Olivia's Trains will continue to operate independently.

Hornby announces more TT:120 models

Hornby continues the rollout of TT:120 products, revealing more items, including a versatile, fully-painted range of red brick buildings.

Leading the news is a further Class 37 37086 in the classic BR corporate blue with yellow ends, representing the eagerly awaited model in late-1960s to early-1980s condition. Originally constructed in 1962 as D6786 and allocated to Gateshead Depot, 37087 has enjoyed a long operational history and is now operated by West Coast Railway Company, where the locomotive is used on charter, heritage and scenic railway tours. Expected in January 2026, the new Class 37 is priced at £159.99.

Three Virgin Mk. 2Fs from the late-‘90s era, including a Second Open 5945, First Open 3344 and a Brake Second Open 9539 are also joining the range. These coaches were frequently seen behind Class 50s. Expected in June 2026, the coaches are priced at £41.99 each.

On the wagon front, modellers will be keen to see another issue of the BR ex-LNER Brake Van, this time E140580 in grey, expected in February and priced at £29.99. Additional wagons in the form of a TT Club 2026 exclusive and Father’s Day are also expected in April 2026 at 14.99 and £19.99, respectively.

Modellers will welcome The Red Brick Collection, which comprises of several ready-painted buildings typical of those found across much of the country. Additional lineside buildings expand the range further.

TT9017 - Station Office - Red Brick Collection - Feb-26 - £34.99
TT9018 - Water Tower - Red Brick Collection - Feb-26 - £29.99
TT9019 - Double Engine Shed - Red Brick Collection - Feb-26 - £58.99
TT9020 - Goods Shed - Red Brick Collection - Mar-26 - £42.99
TT9021 - Signal Box - Red Brick Collection - Mar-26 - £34.99
TT9022 - Station Waiting Room - Red Brick Collection - Feb-26 - £29.99
TT9023 - Diesel Maintenance Depot - Mar-26 - £58.99
TT9024 - Wooden Platelayers Hut - Mar-26 - £12.99
TT9025 - Concrete Platelayers Hut - Mar-26 - £12.99
TT9028 - Station Extended Platform - Mar-26 - £19.99
TT9029 - Coal Stage - Mar-26 - £12.99

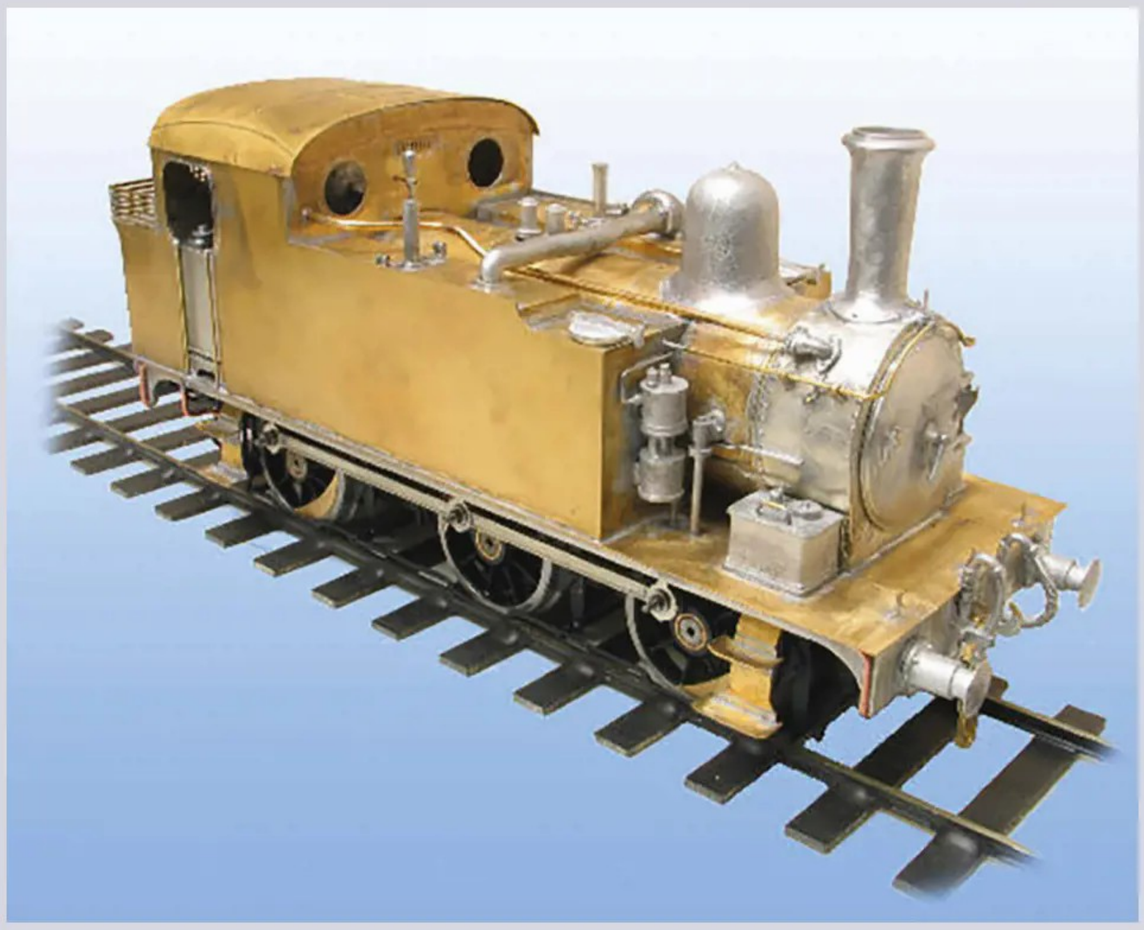
Buckjumper returns with updates in O

Connoisseur Models has announced a revised Buckjumper kit. The LNER Class J69/1 Buckjumper O gauge kit was first produced in 1991. It was an honest best effort at the time and much appreciated by many satisfied modellers.

Modellers expectations have become more sophisticated recently and this kit has been retired for a number of years.

But now, it’s back with a level of extra casting detail that modellers now expect for locos on their layouts. Instructions detail how legacy issues can be addressed with simple hand tools to get the best from the etched components.

Priced at £195.00, the LNER Class J69/1 “Buckjumper” Legacy Kit is available to pre-order now.



Locomotion Models reveals exclusive LNER Class 91

Locomotion Models has announced its latest OO exclusive, the LNER Class 91 No.91150, manufactured by Hornby.

The new model will feature the *National Railway Museum 50 Years 1975-2025* nameplate and the exclusive NRM50 livery. The unique livery celebrates the museum's golden anniversary and the long-standing partnership between LNER and the National Railway Museum. It will be available in both DCC-Ready and Sound-Fitted.

The latest collaboration from Locomotion Models and Hornby, No.91150, will come with all the features present on Hornby's current popular Class 91 models, including separately-fitted detail parts, a 21 Pin DCC decoder socket and a smooth and powerful drive motor system.

No.91150 boasts a colourful ribbon that runs across both sides of the locomotive and features some of the most well-known objects in the museum's collection, including locomotives *Mallard*, *Locomotion No.1* and *Duchess of Hamilton*. The special livery was unveiled at an event at the National Railway Museum on Tuesday, July 8th, 2025.

Available to pre-order now with a £30 deposit, the new model is priced at £244.99 for DCC-Ready models and £299.99 Sound-Fitted.

Expressions of interest requested for exclusive Gresley BG & Buffet in N

Dapol is inviting expressions of interest and will provide updates on how the level of interest is progressing every two weeks, and aims to make a definitive decision on whether to move forward with the project by the end of November.

Due to the limited scope of the prototypes, Dapol anticipates that sales volumes may not be sufficient to make these projects viable through its retail network, so will bring projects to life by selling them directly.

Assuming the project progresses, Dapol will offer customers the opportunity to place a pre-order to secure the models around the same time that decorated samples will be revealed. Typically, it takes an additional nine to 12 months for the models to arrive at the warehouse ready for dispatch. Dapol will not charge any fees before the models are prepared for direct shipment. The proposed liveries are below:

- Gresley Coach LNER Teak Full Brake (BG) 70183
- Gresley Coach LNER Lined Teak Full Brake (BG) 4145
- Gresley Coach BR Crimson Full Brake (BG) E70168E
- Gresley Coach BR Maroon Full Brake (BG) E70176E
- Gresley Coach BR Blue Full Brake (BG) E70146E
- Gresley Coach BR Blue/Grey Buffet W9135E
- Gresley Coach BR Blue/Grey Buffet E9115E

Rails of Sheffield's exclusive Bullion Chocolate van arrives

Rails' latest brand collaboration with Bullion Chocolate has arrived and is available to order now for delivery.

Working with Bullion Chocolate Makers, also of Sheffield, Rails has revealed this special edition Dapol OO 4-wheel vent van, the ideal vehicle to transport delicate chocolate loads around your layout.

Produced in limited quantities, each model comes complete with a luxury pack of chocolate. Priced at £19.95, the specification includes NEM tension-lock couplings and metal wheels and axles.

Accurascale load up with Specialist Aggregates

True-to-Scale Models has teamed up with Accurascale to provide an exclusive range of sustainable wagon and tender loads.

Produced in the UK, these load packs are designed to add the finishing touch for Accurascale locomotives and wagons, or indeed, wagons and locos from other manufacturers.

Five packs have been announced, with more to come depending on popularity.

- 50g Mainline Coal
- 200g Mainline Coal
- 50g Cleveland Iron Ore
- 200g Standard Grey Ballast
- 200g Light Grey Pennine Limestone

50g bags are ideal for a single four-wheeled wagon or tender locomotive, while the 200g packs will load up four small and two bogie wagons.

All products are available and can be purchased via the Accurascale website.

50g: £6.49

200g: £9.95

Hornby celebrates 50 years of DRAX

Modellers can now haul their OO gauge Drax trains in style with the release of a distinctive gold-liveried Hornby Railroad Class 66; plus, there is a special gold-liveried biomass wagon available separately to go behind.

Operated by GBRf, Class 66301 *Drax Power Station 50* was painted in the striking livery to celebrate the anniversary and is popular amongst railway enthusiasts.

The real wagon was unveiled on July 31st, 2024, at Drax Power Station. Coupled behind the loco, a special train travelled to Tyne docks via the Settle & Carlisle line, making a scheduled stop on Ribblehead Viaduct to mark the occasion.

Drax Power Station has been keeping the UK's lights on for over 50 years. It is the largest power station in the country, capable of providing power for five million homes, with an average of 17 biomass trains arriving daily at Drax Power Station.

The Railroad Anniversary Gold Class 66 is priced at £94.99 and the Drax Biomass Gold Wagon at £44.99; both will be available in March 2026.

Production complete on NER 20T Hoppers

Accurascale has announced that the latest chapter in its Powering Britain story, the NER 20-ton hopper wagons, is now complete and the models are preparing to set sail for the UK.

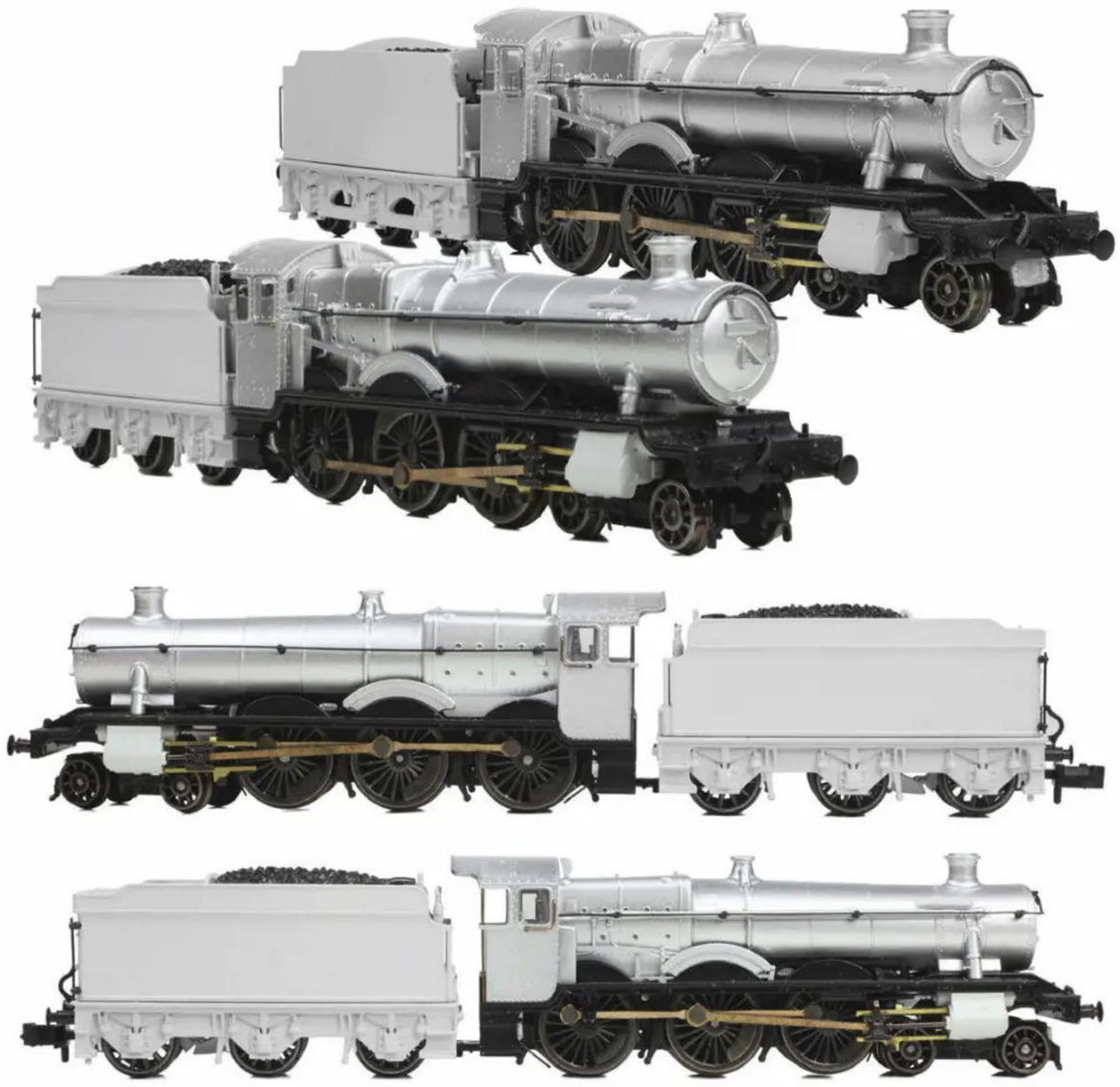
Any layout based on the NER, LNER, or the twilight days of steam—as well as those depicting industrial operations—will find a home for these new wagons.

This extensive range of wagons was not only widespread in use but also remarkably long-lived. First produced by the North Eastern Railway as a revolutionary solution for transporting coal, they continued to serve well into the post-steam era in industrial operations for the National Coal Board, British Steel, and other powerhouses of British industry.

This range bridges the gap between the use of small Victorian, wooden-planked waggons and the arrival of the much-improved steel-bodied hoppers for the transportation of coal and coke in Northern England and the Borders in the Accurascale range.

Built with a diecast chassis to provide weight and full body detail, this family includes the P6, P7, P8, and Q3 variants of these distinctive 20-ton hoppers—four types in total, each with variations depending on period.

Available to pre-order now in triple packs, priced at £84.95, some packs have already sold out. Delivery is expected by mid-November.



Graham Farish announces Hall Class

These new models have been developed from the rails up with detailed surveys and extensive research undertaken on both classes to ensure that accurate models of each can be produced. That means a new Hawksworth Tender too, joining the Collett 4,000 gallon version from the popular Graham Farish Castle Class, and the two tenders are interchangeable between the two classes, as was the case with the real locomotives.

Four locomotives make up the initial range, with two 'Halls' comprising No. 4962 *Ragley Hall* and preservation-favourite No. 4936 *Kinlet Hall*, both sporting BR liveries.

The 'Modified Hall' is finished as another preserved example, No. 6959 *Raveningham Hall* in the GWR livery in which it took part in the 1975 cavalcade at Shildon to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, and so this model forms part of Bachmann's Railway Celebrations range. The second 'Modified Hall' is No. 7904 *Fountains Hall*, which is finished in BR Lined Black Early Emblem livery.

Available to pre-order now, all four models are due for release in early-2026, priced at £189.95 DCC-Ready and £299.95 Sound-Fitted.

Revolution announces a bulled-up 66

Revolution Trains is continuing its association with Martin House Children's Hospice in Yorkshire by revealing a limited edition N gauge Class 66 66190 *Martin House Children's Hospice*, depicted in fully 'bulled-up' condition as it appeared at its naming in summer 2023.

Unveiled this weekend at the annual International N Gauge Show in Warwickshire, the model reflects how superb the real loco looked at the naming ceremony, with a gloss finish, white-rimmed wheels and a newly fitted, untarnished exhaust silencer unit.

The locomotive will be supplied with fine photo-etched nameplates for those who wish to fit them.

Revolution has previously raised funds for Martin House through sales of its popular N gauge Drax IIA-D biomass hoppers, in association with Rails of Sheffield, and more recently through its exclusive model of 66301 in striking Drax gold livery. Sales of this model will enable a further donation to be made.

Orders are open now and both DCC Sound and DC Silent versions are available, however, numbers are limited. The models are expected to ship in October.

Charity wagon for The Children's Hospital

Rails of Sheffield has revealed a limited-edition OO wagon, created to raise funds for The Children's Hospital Charity — with all profits going directly to support the vital work of Sheffield Children's Hospital.

Decorated in a bright, cheerful livery inspired by the hospital's charity branding, the exclusive, limited-edition model is available direct from the Rails of Sheffield website at £19.99.

Atkitz launches platform components

Designed to easily interlock, these self-coloured sections will assemble to produce your own unique platform frontage, leaving you free to assemble the desired shape and length of structure.

The straight sections are approx. 290 mm long and the left and right sloping sections, and bay platform ends complement these.

Straight sections - RRP £7.00, Ramp Sections (L/H and R/H) - RRP £4.00, Bay/Dock sections - RRP £5.00.

All-new Hornby J13 shunts into the spotlight

Doncaster's diminutive saddle tank receives the 'super-detail' treatment, delighting Great Northern and LNER modellers.

The announcement of a newly-tooled Great Northern Railway (GNR) Class J13 (later LNER Class J52) from Hornby has been met with excitement, offering a significant upgrade to its long-serving predecessor.

The first versions of this new model have now arrived in stock, ready to grace pre-grouping and LNER-era layouts with stunning detail and performance. Hornby's previous J13 tooling, originally from 1981, served modellers well, but this new rendition brings the humble 0-6-0ST firmly into the super-detail era and brings elegance to any layout, even western-based ones.

Differences from the J52 reviewed by Tony Wright in the September edition of BRM are:

- GNR Lined Green
- Raised Safari cab roof ventilator
- Matt smokebox and cab roof finish
- Double footstep arrangement
- Coal bunker with coal rails
- Flush-faced connecting rods
- Brass Ramsbottom safety valves
- 3' 3" built-up chimney
- GNR tapered buffer stocks

Available to buy now, prices for the DCC-Ready models is £174.99.

Bachmann breaks new ground with Class 13

Bachmann Branchline has revealed the first-ever ready-to-run OO gauge model of the BR Class 13, the unique double-headed diesel shunter created in 1965 for hump shunting at Tinsley Yard.

Formed by permanently coupling two Class 08s – a master and slave – the Class 13s were built to provide the extra power needed to push wagons over the hump without risking grounding. Just three were made, and all stayed at Tinsley for their working lives.

Bachmann's model will feature two fully motorised units, each with a five-pole motor, flywheel, and all-wheel pick-up, plus Stay Alive systems for smooth DCC performance.

Lighting will be fully configurable, with functioning marker lights and cab illumination, while a Plux22 decoder socket in each unit allows for independent or linked sound setups without the need for a conductive coupler.

The first releases of the Branchline Class 13 depict:

No. D4502 in BR Green (Wasp Stripes)

No. 13003 in BR Blue

Models are expected to arrive before the end of 2025 and can be pre-ordered from approved Bachmann stockists. The two models will be available in standard, Sound-Fitted and Sound-Fitted Deluxe formats. The DCC versions are pre-fitted with two premium Zimo DCC decoders and are able to operate on analogue systems with an authentic start-up and running sounds when DC power is applied.

Standard - £399.95

Sound Fitted - £539.95

Sound Fitted Deluxe - £569.95

Dapol O gauge Pannier Tank production samples

Modellers will be pleased to hear that the latest batch, including a number of preserved examples, are in the final stages of production and samples were recently on display at the Guildex show in Stafford.

The models are expected to arrive in the UK by the end of November/December 2025. A small price increase has been necessary. However, if your model was pre-ordered before the increase was made, the earlier price will be honoured.

Golden Valley Hobbies expands with N gauge

Golden Valley Hobbies is expanding its range of model rail transfers supplied by leading manufacturer Railtec to now include 2mm/N Scale items. The 2mm range starts off with the best-selling lines from the OO range and will be grown to offer more unique and interesting designs in the near future.

Priced from £2.90 - £9.90 depending on sheet, direct from Golden Valley Hobbies website.

00 | 1957-1990s | £££ 389.00-489.00

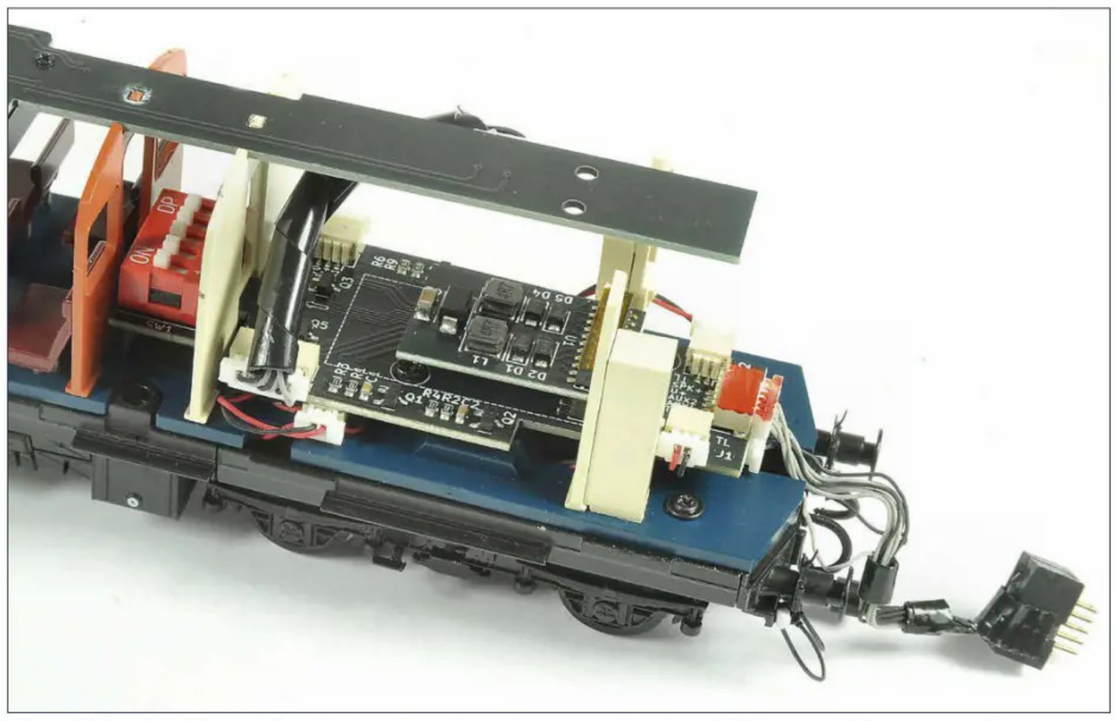
Heljan Class 104

Paul Marshall Potter

The 'Northern' character stands out with this 1960s livery and fine-fitted details, including Eastern Region-specific bogie steps.

A welcome addition to the fleet of first-generation DMUs available, and very much a Midlands to northern UK 'stereotype. In use from the 1957 to the 1990s, they had a notable presence on commuter and branch line services. The review sample is Cat #1452, an Eastern Region two-car unit with DMBS and DTCL as the formation in BR green. I've also personally bought the three-car set Cat #1453 in BR blue with a DMBS, TCL, and DMCL formation, and the comments on the review sample also relate to my own three-car purchase experience.

The overall appearance captures the open feel of the units, particularly with the driver's and corridor connection windows. Glazing is particularly good; there's very little prismatic reflection from the edges, giving a thin sheet metal appearance to the sides and ends. This allows an unhindered view into the cars with their correct seating configurations.



The 21-pin Decoder is a simple plug-and-play fitting with ease of access.

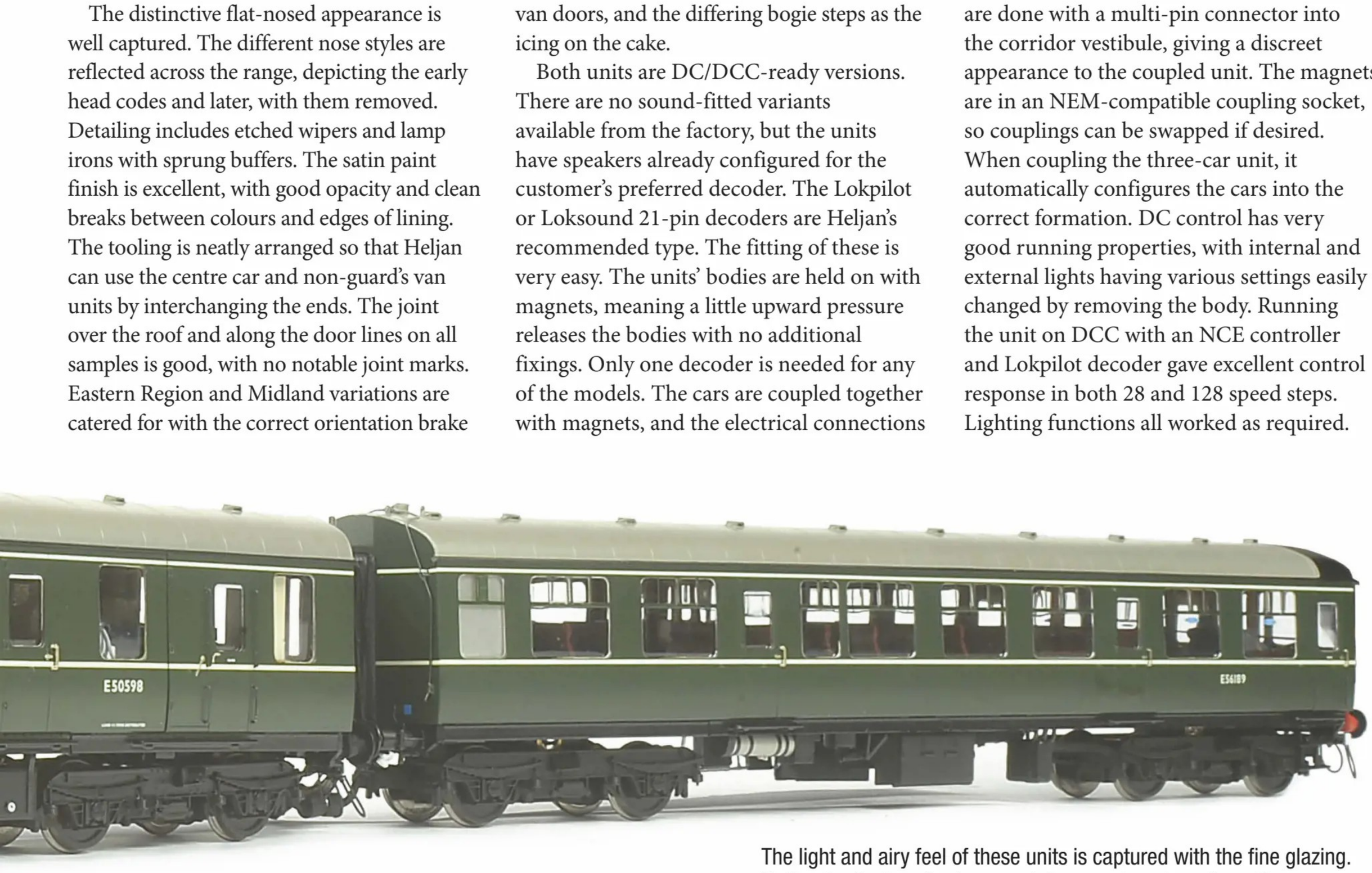
The thin traction tyres are visible on the driving motor car.

Just four magnets hold the body effectively on both cars.

Magnetic connections allow close coupling between vehicles.

The distinctive flat-nosed appearance is well captured. The different nose styles are reflected across the range, depicting the early head codes and later, with them removed. Detailing includes etched wipers and lamp irons with sprung buffers. The satin paint finish is excellent, with good opacity and clean breaks between colours and edges of lining. The tooling is neatly arranged so that Heljan can use the centre car and non-guard's van units by interchanging the ends. The joint over the roof and along the door lines on all samples is good, with no notable joint marks. Eastern Region and Midland variations are catered for with the correct orientation brake van doors, and the differing bogie steps as the icing on the cake.

Both units are DC/DCC-ready versions. There are no sound-fitted variants available from the factory, but the units have speakers already configured for the customer's preferred decoder. The Lokpilot or Loksound 21-pin decoders are Heljan's recommended type. The fitting of these is very easy. The units' bodies are held on with magnets, meaning a little upward pressure releases the bodies with no additional fixings. Only one decoder is needed for any of the models. The cars are coupled together with magnets, and the electrical connections are done with a multi-pin connector into the corridor vestibule, giving a discreet appearance to the coupled unit. The magnets are in an NEM-compatible coupling socket, so couplings can be swapped if desired. When coupling the three-car unit, it automatically configures the cars into the correct formation. DC control has very good running properties, with internal and external lights having various settings easily changed by removing the body. Running the unit on DCC with an NCE controller and Lokpilot decoder gave excellent control response in both 28 and 128 speed steps. Lighting functions all worked as required.



The light and airy feel of these units is captured with the fine glazing. Notice the Eastern Region guards' compartment configuration; the door position is reversed with the Midland region units.

00 | 1957-1990s | £££ 389.00-489.00

Classy era and livery-specific packaging give a really nice appearance across the range of Class 104 releases.

The chassis is metal casting with the appropriate vehicle details fitted. The cars are heavy at 246g for the unpowered car and 265g for the driving unit. The motor is cleverly hidden in the floor of the driving car and has cardan shaft connections to each motor bogie, where one axle per bogie is fitted with traction tyres. Yes, you did read that right, traction tyres! Firstly, these aren't unusual in contemporary UK ready-to-run models; plenty of N gauge releases have them, as do some of the recent OO models. These are a far cry from the 1980s material and allow the units to climb and descend gradients sure-footedly and without the cogging extant on other similar units that are available - excellent stuff. Electrical pick-up is from wipers fitted to all wheels on the unit, including any centre cars, with the power transferred via the corridor electrical connectors.

One slight downside to the open appearance is the electrical components being visible in the guard's compartment. Some are quite visible, and if darker materials were used, they would be less so.

To summarise, this is an excellent model that has filled a significant gap in the first-generation DMU market. Widely seen across the Midlands and North of England, their longevity means they should have a wide appeal for many modellers who want to capture an accurate fleet mix of those halcyon days!

FACTFILE

Model: (review item in bold)
1456 Class 104 2 Car DMU SC53424/SC53434 ScotRail Mexican Bean
1455 Class 104 2 Car DMU M53421/M53529 BR Blue
1458 Class 104 2 Car DMU L701 53437/53479 Revised Network SouthEast
1452 Class 104 2 Car DMU E50598/E56189 BR Green Small Yellow Panels
1453 Class 104 3 Car DMU M50436/M59141/M50488 BR Blue (Full Yellow Ends/Headcode Panel)
1457 Class 104 3 Car DMU BX487 M53424/M59207/M53434 BR Blue/Grey
1454 Class 104 3 Car DMU M50472/M59180/M50524 BR Blue Blackpool
1451 Class 104 3 Car DMU M50478/M59186/M50530 BR Green (Speed Whiskers and Coaching Stock roundel)
1450 Class 104 3 Car DMU M50422/M59134/M50426 BR Green (Early) with Lion & Wheel Emblem
Construction: Metal chassis and plastic body
Weight: 246-265g
Era: 1957-1990s
Price: £389.00-489.00
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Pipes, couplings, speedometer drive and swing link fitting

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Traction tyres and excellent performance
- ✓ Quality of assembly and finish
- ✓ Correct prototype formations

WIN A J26!

Tony Wright **is impressed with the new J26, as you can find out in his review on the next page. How would you like the chance to win one? Here's how...**

Worth £129.99!

One lucky reader can be the owner of the **Oxford Rail BR Late (plain black) 65736 0-6-0 Class J26, worth £129.99!**

For your chance to win, answer the question below to enter the prize draw. **None of the J26s made it into preservation, when was the last withdrawn from service?**

A: 1958
B: 1960
C: 1962
D: 1964

Head to www.world-of-railways.co.uk/Competitions for your chance to win

The competition will close on December 31st, 2025.

00 | 1904-1962 | £££ 129.95 – 229.95

Oxford Rail J26

Tony Wright

Having introduced a model of the LNER J27 (NER P3) some little time ago, it makes perfect sense for Oxford Rail to offer the earlier J26 (NER P2), such was the commonality between the two classes (the J27s using J26 boilers at times). On occasions, the two classes appear to be indistinguishable from each other, the longer smokebox fitted to some J27s being a principal difference. Built between June 1904 and December 1905, the 50 P1s were the largest 0-6-0s built by the NER at the time. They lasted all through LNER days and well into BR times (as J26s), the first withdrawals not taking place until 1958, with the last in the class lasting until 1962, giving near-60 years' service, plodding along hauling unfitted freights in the North East. None saw preservation.

The first thing to state is that I think this is an excellent model, especially given its price. On examining all the information at my disposal (the RCTS, Yeadon, Isinglass, etc.), it checks out just about everywhere. The model I had for review represents mid-LNER days, still with its Ramsbottom safety valves (enclosed in a large, brass bonnet, painted black), but with the original wheel and handle fastening on the smokebox door having been replaced by twin handles (the wheel and handle arrangement had all gone by wartime, and the safety valves were Ross pop). In all main (and minor) dimensions, it's really spot-on, with all detail present, some of it separately applied.

A representation of the inside motion is present below the boiler, fitted on top of the solid chassis (which really should be separate frames). It might have been painted bright red after shopping, but I'd weather it down. There are a couple of (I assume moulding process?) seams along both sides towards the top of the boiler, but my main criticism of the boiler is the way the handrail pillars stick out horizontally – they should really line up towards the centre of the boiler (this anachronism is not unique to Oxford Rail – I assume it's a simpler production technique?).

But these are minor, critical observations; the overall finish is superlative, with a pleasing feature being the smokebox rendered in a matt finish, rather than the overall gloss of the rest of the loco. The application of the numerals and lettering is perfect. I'm not sure if the buffer stocks should be red or not (the buffers are

As pleasing a finish on a model as one could wish for is presented here.

Cab interior detail is picked out in appropriate colours, and there's a hinged fallplate, too.

These locos were never vacuum-braked, so a standpipe is not necessary, though scale three-links would be nice.

FACTFILE

Models (review item in bold):
LNER (plain black) 1057 0-6-0 Class J26
NER P2 (lined black) 1678 0-6-0 Class J26
BR Early (plain black) 65767 0-6-0 Class J26
BR Late (plain black) 65736 0-6-0 Class J26
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic body
Weight: 240g
Era: 1904-1962
Price: £129.95-229.95
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Brake rigging, drawbar, fret of loco tools

All the brake rigging is fitted at source.

As is the norm now, DCC provision is in the tender.

sprung), because the LNER painting spec' was for black stocks, but Darlington often went its own way. The cab is fully-detailed, with different details picked out in different colours.

Performance is exemplary, with super smooth control throughout the whole range (just on DC). There's sufficient weight for it to haul any scale-equivalent train, with no jerking or stuttering because of the all-wheel pick-up arrangement. And, all the wheels are concentric, with consistent back-to-backs, enabling the loco to run perfectly through all types of OO pointwork.

Provision for DCC is in the tender, and there's a sugar cube speaker already installed. Though the instructions tell one how to fit the brake rigging, it's already in place. A shorter drawbar is included in the accessories bag, along with a fret of loco tools – a splendid touch!

In conclusion, I think this is a very fine model, at an exceptional price, and I thoroughly recommend it.

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Overall accuracy
- ✓ Quality of finish
- ✓ Performance
- ✓ Value for money

00 | 1878-1962 | £££ 199.95 – 309.95

Rapido SE&CR Class O1 0-6-0

Tony Wright

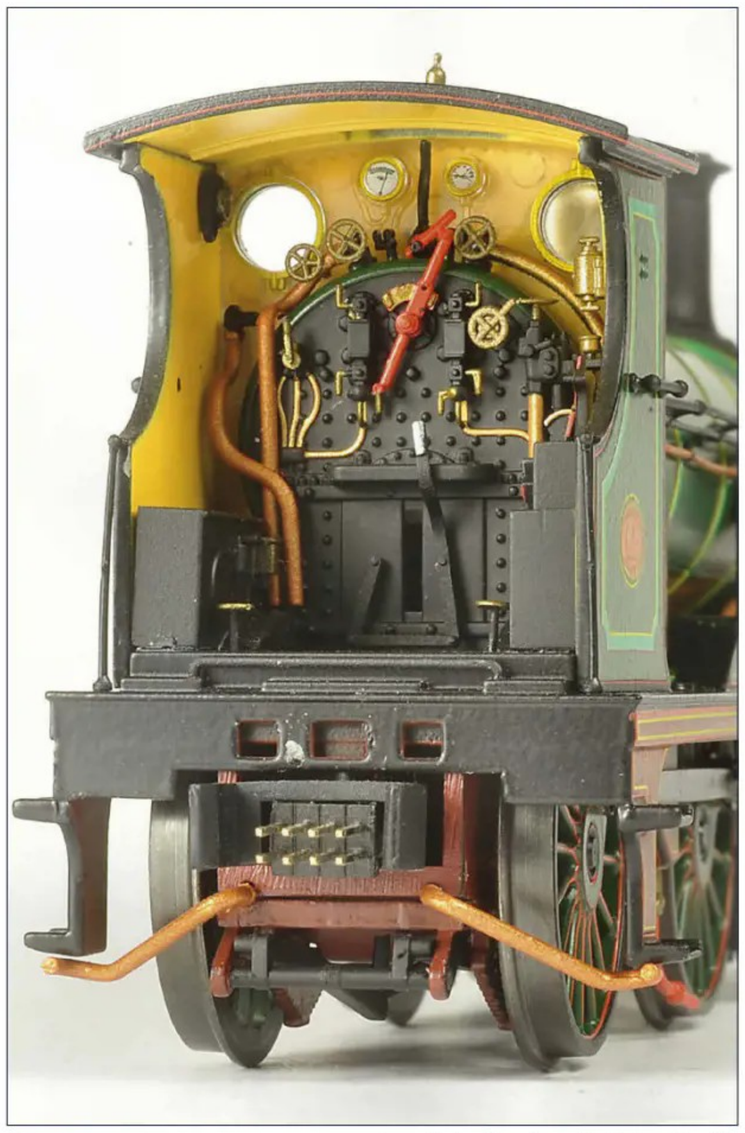
Because my prototype material on the locomotives of the South Eastern & Chatham railway is limited (in his RCTS book on *The Locomotives History of the South Eastern & Chatham Railway*, D L Bradley doesn't even describe the O1s because they were built before the company was formed), I'll only offer the briefest of prototype notes. Designed by James Stirling, and built for the South Eastern Railway between 1878 and 1899 by Sharp Stewart and Co, and the SER's own works at Ashford, 122 Class O 0-6-0s saw service as all-purpose freight locos. The need for more power saw 59 of the Os rebuilt with larger boilers (with domes), thus becoming O1s (the subject of the model), the work being conducted under the responsibility of Wainwright in 1903. One (31048 under BR's ownership) was fitted with smaller driving wheels, thus increasing its tractive effort.

The later, larger and more powerful C Class relegated the O1s to lesser duties, though the last of the class wasn't withdrawn until 1962. Thankfully, 31065 was saved for preservation and can be seen today on the Bluebell Railway. By far the best history is contained in the owner's manual provided with the model.

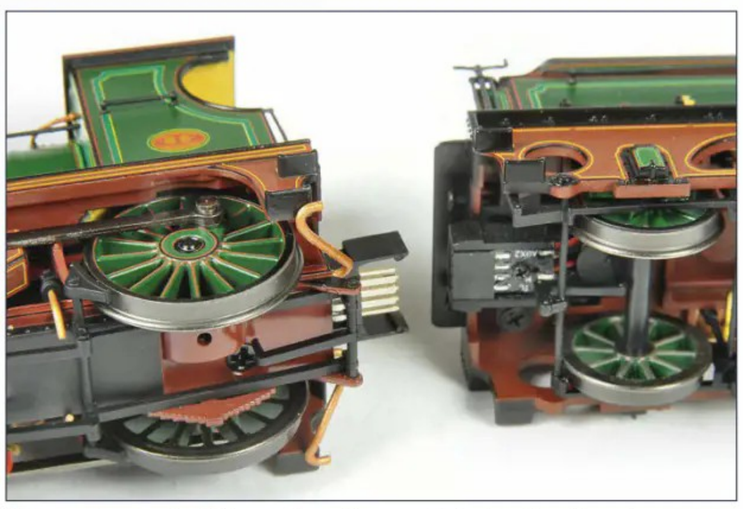
And, what a model it is. To describe it as exquisite is something of an understatement! I find I keep on repeating myself with regard to assessing the latest mainstream RTR locomotives, but, yet again, I have to state that this is one of the finest RTR locos in OO Gauge it has ever been my privilege to assess.

I don't have access to the equivalent types of drawings on, say, LNER locomotive types, but on checking on prototype photographs, it seems to be spot-on. The construction is die-cast metal and plastic, the former providing plenty of weight for this little beauty to haul probably more than a prototype scale

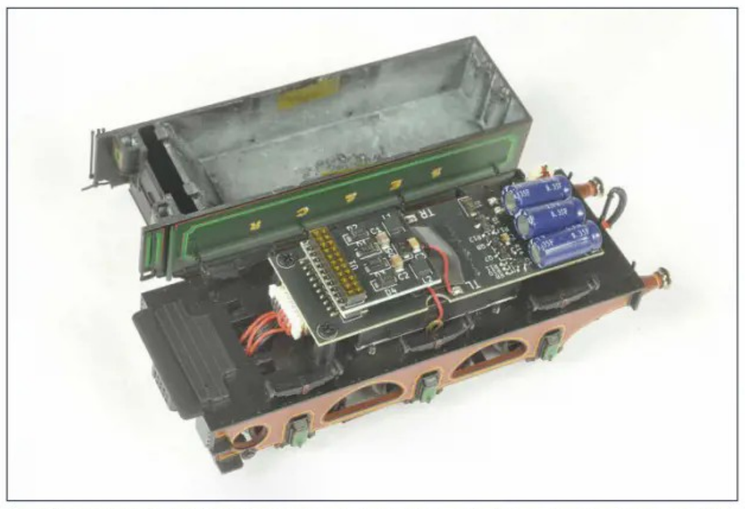
A first job for me would be to lose the tension-lock and fit the scale screw-link.



Have you ever seen a more detailed cab interior? Absolutely incredible.



Though probably not unique, this is the best mechanical/electrical drawbar I've seen.



A diecast tender body ensures stable running, with DCC provision inside.

Plenty of pick-ups mean stutter-free running.

FACTFILE

Models (review item in bold):
SECR O1 No.31064 British Railways Early Crest Unlined Black
SECR O1 No.65 Wainwright Green (As Preserved)
SECR O1 No.373 Wainwright Green
SECR O1 No.385 SECR Grey
SECR O1 No.A7 SR Lined Black (Egyptian Lettering)
SECR O1 No.1437 SR Plain Black (Egyptian Lettering)
SECR O1 No.1046 SR Bulleid Black
SECR O1 No.1379 SR Bulleid Sunshine
SECR O1 No.100 East Kent Railway Black
SECR O1 No.s1065 British Railways Sunshine
SECR O1 No.31065 British Railways Late Crest Unlined Black
SECR O1 No.65 Bramble Bluebell Railway Blue (What If)
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic body
Weight: 250g
Era: 1878-1962
Price: £199.95 – £309.95
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Discs, screw-link couplings, coupling hooks, vacuum pipes and cabside doors

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Performance
- ✓ Accuracy
- ✓ Superlative livery application
- ✓ Super-smooth running

equivalent. Attention to detail is incredible, with many items separately-applied; speaking of this, do take care, as I was placing the model for photography, one of the tender buffers came loose in handling!

Though it's difficult to see, a representation of the inside motion is present. The cab interior is fully detailed and painted in a variety of appropriate colours. Performance, as expected, is exemplary (though one is advised not to run the loco using older controllers from the likes of Hammant & Morgan), with super-smooth running, assisted by all-wheel pick-ups and entirely concentric wheels all round. Back-to-backs are uniform, allowing smooth passage through all types of pointwork. Fitting for DCC is in the tender, with provision for everything being via the 21-pin socket. The loco and tender are coupled both electrically and mechanically by one of the most user-friendly and ingenious plug-and-socket arrangements I've seen. I've left the best to last, and this is the livery application. Was there ever a more-elaborate livery applied to any British locomotive than that used by the SE&CR? Surtees was certainly an engineering artist of the highest order!

Assessing the livery application as 'perfect' is a truism. It must have been the case that several detail items must have been fitted *after* the loco was painted; even so, no evidence of adhesive over-spill is apparent. Even the steam reverser and sandboxes are lined! Talking to friends who are professional model painters, it would cost quite a bit more for them to undertake this livery on a model than this model costs overall! At the risk of repeating myself, my dictionary of superlatives is exhausted of late!

There are the usual items for the owner to fit if desired, including discs, screw-link couplings, coupling hooks, vacuum pipes and cabside doors. With regard to the last-mentioned items, if fitted, the loco will then not negotiate 2nd radius curves. Thoroughly-recommended.

TT:120 | 1997-2003 | £££ 239.99

Hornby Class 43 High-Speed Train pack

Steven Draper

The model captures the fast, confident looks and bold early Virgin Branding. Both power cars look the same, although one is named and powered, and one is a dummy.

Back in the mid-1970s, British Rail unveiled something that didn't just look fast — it *was* fast. The InterCity 125, or Class 43 HST, was sleek, pointy, the undisputed king of UK long-distance, intercity travel.

After successfully accelerating us into the Age of the Train, along came the 1990s. Cool Britannia. Britpop and, of course, rail privatisation. In 1997, Virgin Trains took over the Cross Country and West Coast Main Line franchises, slapping bright red paint and the now-famous white 'tick' logo across much of Britain. Out went the dignified greys of the previous Swallow livery and in came something louder, brasher — and for many of us, instantly memorable. If you travelled in the late-'90s or early-noughties, you'll likely remember seeing these red rockets whooshing past, bringing to everyone the excitement of high-speed rail, with a slice of glamour.

This new TT:120 model of 43093 *Lady in Red* captures that moment perfectly. Bright, bold, and unapologetically brand Virgin. Nostalgia? Absolutely. And it looks fantastic on any layout.

In the box, there are two power car units: the powered car with a 5-pole skew-wound motor, weighing in at a solid 258g thanks to a die-cast chassis, and a dummy car to complete the set (numbered 43097). Lights are directional and nicely done, with a stylish and neatly applied chrome effect around the lamp units that adds to the realism.

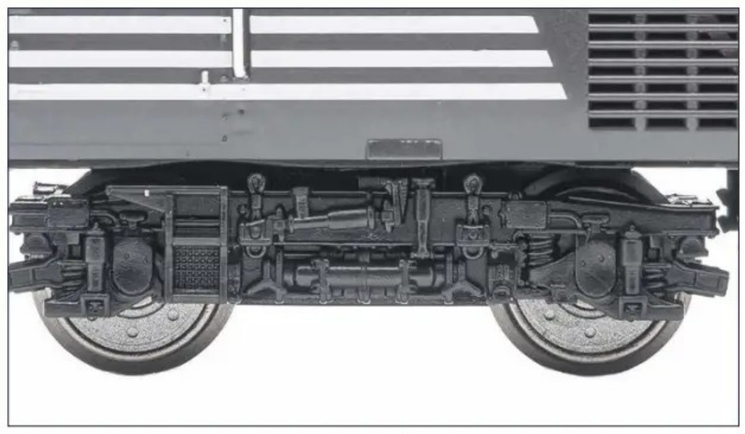
Our sample came DC-fitted, but converting to DCC is simple enough. Turn over, locate the four screws, gently ease off the body, and you're looking at a Next18 decoder socket. Hornby recommends fitting decoders to both units and running them as a consist — DCC enables the cab lighting to shine on the details Hornby has fitted into the cab. With Hornby's TXS chips, download the sound, open the throttle and the engine roars power, plus there's a selection of realistic horns to play the tones while keeping curious domestic cats safe.

The HST's face is part of what made it so iconic. Sleek, streamlined and oozing the

Grills are fine, and you can see the fan from some angles.

It practically begs to be weathered. If you've got an airbrush and a free afternoon, you'll be in your element.

The rear end is detailed, etch nameplates and cosmetic coupling hooks are provided.



Bogies details are crisp and a treat for anyone who enjoys weathering.

All axles are powered and there is an NEM Kinematic coupling.

Removing the body to add crew and DCC is straightforward.

confidence from looking like it's already halfway to anywhere. I spent a good 15 minutes just turning it under a lamp and comparing it to photos, concluding Hornby's version absolutely nails it. The nose cone has just the right taper, with subtle curves that play with the light like the real thing – maybe a slight sheen to the paint being the only enhancement I could think of.

The separately-fitted wipers, handrails, and see-through grilles are all crisp and convincing, far more scale model than train set. Peer through the roof vents and you'll spot the fan inside. Even the bogies are covered in fine detailing, with metal-effect wheels and painted components throughout. That said, it's reassuringly robust and more suitable to younger fingers than other models.

One thing that does stand out is the clean, sandy-brown roof panels. It's accurate, but almost too clean. I suspect for many it won't stay that way for long. A little sooty weathering and some dry-brushing will bring out the best in this model. It practically begs to be weathered. If you've got an airbrush and a free afternoon, you'll be in your element.

Performance is smooth as silk. From gentle crawls to full-speed blasts around second radius curves, the powered unit ran faultlessly. I haven't tested it with a full rake of suitable Mk. 3s yet, but given the motor, all-wheel drive and weight, I'd be surprised if it struggled.

Whether you aim to recreate the early years of privatisation or simply seek a colourful adventure within the mini world of TT, Hornby's *Lady in Red* is totally tempting and won't disappoint.

FACTFILE

Models (reviews items in bold):
TT3021M Intercity Blue & Grey
TT3022M Intercity Swallow
TT3023M/TXSM GWR 'Pentagram' Green
TT1004M/TXSM Intercity Blue & Grey set with carriages
TT3047M GNER Blue
TT3048M Virgin Trains Red and Black
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic body
Weight: 258g (motor fitted power car)
Era: 9 1996-2008
Price: £239.99
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Etch plates and dummy coupling hooks

Front on captures the face and benefits from the wheels being to scale.

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Exceptional livery application
- ✓ Well executed 'face'
- ✓ Weighty
- ✓ Fine detail touches

There are photos of the two power cars running together, but a rake of Mk.3s would look great.

OO | 1948-preservation | £££ 149.95

Dapol Black Label GWR Q13 Inspection Saloon

Rails Of Sheffield Exclusive

Jerry Clifford

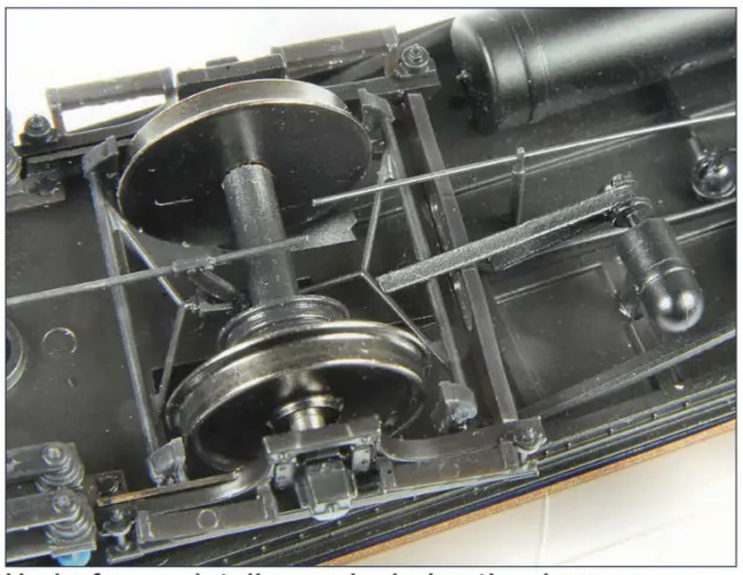
Rails of Sheffield has teamed up with Dapol to release the GWR-designed Q13 inspection saloon in its Black Label range. The Q13s were designed and ordered by the GWR's last CME, F W Hawksworth. Seven were built at Swindon, although they didn't actually enter service until shortly after nationalisation in 1948.

The Inspection or Engineers' saloons were very distinctive-looking vehicles; at 52', they were shorter than most coaches and had large windows all round, including both ends. They were equipped with vacuum brakes, speedometers, sofas and a kitchen and toured the system, usually as a single loco and coach, assessing track, infrastructure and signal sighting by the S&T department. Despite the design being of Great Western origin, the vehicles could be seen as far afield as the West Highlands of Scotland on inspection duties. The coaches had long working lives and all seven have made it into preservation, where they have proved very popular as observation cars – the example based on the Severn Valley Railway even doing a turn as the Royal Train for the visit of the Duke of Gloucester in 2007.

Despite the entire fleet amounting to just seven vehicles, Dapol has released the model with two different body sides, four different ends and six different liveries. The two offered for review are BL-201-001 in the original chocolate and cream livery and BL1-201-003 in BR blue/grey. First impression of the models is very good, being highly-detailed and very well finished. There are lots of separately-applied details on both the body and the underframe, although some do appear very fragile and one or two would benefit from being more securely fixed. Black Label models are promoted as being very high spec and the saloons certainly have an impressive array of features. The coach has a full lighting suite, including both interior and directional head

Label Q13 Inspection Saloon
Clip positions indicated in red
(Note: clips are on both coach body sides)
Card shims can be used (if required) to keep the body side retaining clips disengaged whilst you remove the coach body.
Insert card
Insert card
Removing the body will give access to the circuit board that is part of the chassis.
Remove the blanking plug and insert the decoder of your choice taking care to align it correctly on the pins. We recommend a Zimo MN180N18.
The image below shows a NEXT-18 decoder correctly installed (close up decoder image on page 8).
Pull handle out
Pivot Point
With your thumbnails, prise out the lower edge of the body and insert thin card shims to disengage the retaining clips. The diagram opposite shows the position of the clips that retain the body.

The inspection saloon comes with a comprehensive instruction booklet.



Underframe detail even includes the dynamo pulley on the axle – almost impossible to see.

The neat bank of switches allows DC users to control the full suite of lights.

The highly-detailed bogies contain numerous separately-applied details.

The ends of the saloons display subtle detail differences according to livery.

FACTFILE

Factfile (Review item in bold):
Q13 Inspection Saloon, BR WR Chocolate & Cream W80943
Q13 Inspection Saloon, BR WR Chocolate & Cream W80976W
Q13 Inspection Saloon, BR Blue/ Grey ADW 80970
Q13 Inspection Saloon, BR Executive DW 80975
Q13 Inspection Saloon, BR Scotrail DW 80975
Q13 Inspection Saloon, GWR Chocolate & Cream (Twin Cities) 80972
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic body
Weight: 170g
Era: 1948-preservation
Price: £149.95
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Scale couplings and pipework

and tail lamps. These are fully controllable via a Next18 socket and stay alive for DCC users or a neat bank of switches tucked away on the underframe for those on analogue. Chip-fitting involves removal of the body, which is straightforward thanks to the clear and comprehensive instruction booklet provided. This also gives access to the interior, which is superbly fitted out with sofas, curtains, kitchen and brake compartment – even the ornate pattern of the upholstery is reproduced. All this effort isn't wasted, as the interior is very visible thanks to the large windows and lighting.

The chassis features sprung buffers and a diecast frame, which gives nice, low-down weight. The bogies are beautiful mouldings with more separately-applied fittings and feature all-metal wheels and split axle pick-up for the lighting, although one set of wheels was loose on arrival due to being under-gauge – easily rectified by gently easing the wheelset out to the correct BtoB. A nice feature is that the brakes are slightly outside the line of the wheels for OO, meaning that fitting EM or P4 wheels would be a very simple task. Tension-lock couplings in NEM pockets are provided at both ends, though these can be replaced by cosmetic pipework and prototype couplings included in the detailing pack.

Overall, these are superb models, which capture the distinctive, stubby appearance of the prototype well.

The partially lowered droplight is a nice touch and allows a better view of the fully-detailed kitchen.

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Accuracy
- ✓ Lighting features
- ✓ Standard of detail

00 | 2002-modern day | £££ 339.99

Hornby Avanti West Coast Class 390 Pendolino 'Cop 26'

Jerry Clifford

The latest incarnation of Hornby's Class 390 Pendolino is a four-car train pack (R30444), in the striking 'Ride Against Climate Change', 'Cop26' livery. The Class 390s were built in Italy by Alston/Fiat Ferroviaria between 2001 and 2005 to replace the ageing fleet of Class 86/87/90 loco-hauled trains on the West Coast Main Line, following the awarding of the franchise to Virgin Trains in 1997. The trains were originally introduced as eight-car sets, increasing to nine-car in the mid-2000s, with a number of them being increased to 11-cars in the mid-2010s. The entire fleet now operates under the Avanti West Coast flag. For those modellers with the space, Hornby offers additional coach packs (R40482, R40483 and R40451), to enable the full 11-car train to be assembled.

Hornby was quick off the mark with its introduction of the 390, the first Virgin-liveried models being produced in 2004. The models have received minor modifications over the intervening years, including upgraded DCC sockets and numerous livery options, but are essentially the same as when first introduced. That said, despite the tooling now being the best part of 20 years old, it still holds up well, testimony to just how good they were when first released. Moulded detail is crisp and sharp and the sleek look of the prototype is captured well.

As well as the company colours, Hornby has offered the 390s in a number of the vinyl advertising liveries, including the rainbow Pride set from 2022. Your reviewer cut his trainspotting teeth on the grubby BR corporate blue of the 1970s and isn't really a fan of the modern, multi-coloured schemes which, in his view, do nothing to enhance the lines of the prototype. However, like it or not, it can't be denied that the application of the complex livery is superb, with sharp edges and excellent definition between the colours.

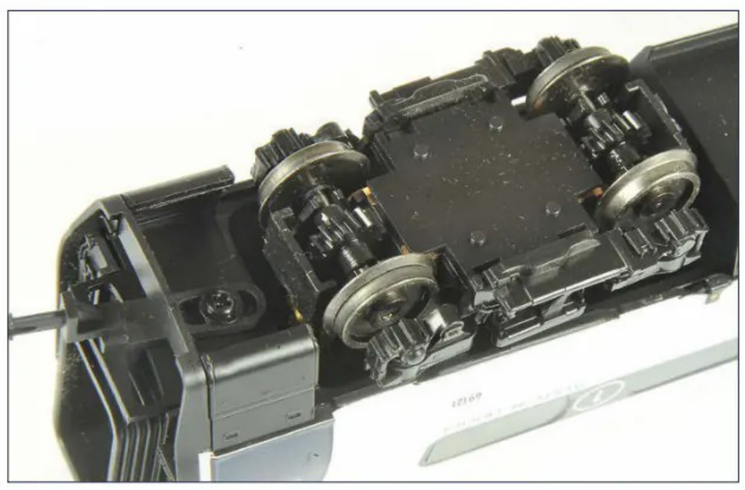
Where the models are perhaps starting to show their age is in the drive mechanism. Power is provided by a single 4-wheel-drive bogie at the rear end of one of the power cars, although pick-up is provided by all eight wheels on the car. The 3-pole motor is smooth and controllable throughout the speed range with a very good turn of speed, but, by today's standards, feels underpowered. That said, it copes with the four-car train

Hornby has captured the striking lines and complex livery of the 390 well.

The four-car set being put through its paces on Tony Wright's 'Little Bytham'.

The train was painted to mark COP 26 in Glasgow in 2021.

The pantographs are nicely modelled.



Underside view showing the four-wheel-drive power bogie and neat central coupling.

pack with ease and there is plenty of video evidence available to suggest that it also copes well with a full rake of cars.

Likewise, DCC provision is basic. Both power cars have 21-pin sockets, which control head and tail lights but there is no speaker or provision for fitting sound. The couplings between cars are very neat, central clips that replicate the prototype well without impeding the effective tilt action when running, but there is no electrical connection or coach pick-ups, so lighting is restricted to the ends.

Overall, these are nice models, if a little dated in some respects, and Hornby is to be commended for offering the full suite of cars in these complex liveries.

FACTFILE

Model: R30444 Avanti West Coast Class 390 - 390121 (COP26 Livery)
Construction: Plastic body and metal chassis
Weight: 320g
Era: Modern Day
Price: £339.99
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: N/A

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Excellent livery application
✓ Standard of detail
✓ Smooth running

Sonic Models GCR/ LNER A5/1 4-6-2T

Rails of Sheffield Exclusive

Tony Wright

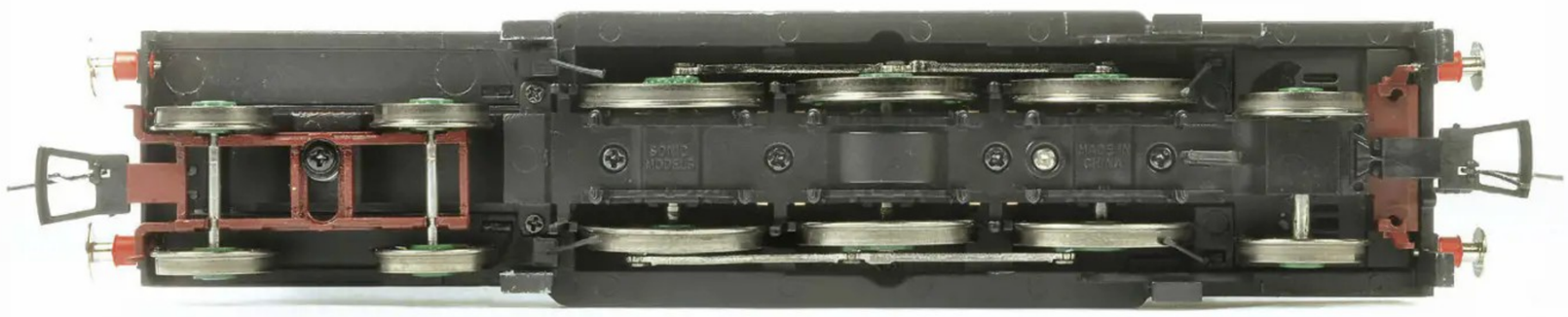
Was there ever a more elegant big tank from any other British railway, especially in this livery?

I reviewed the original Sonic A5 with some little reluctance because I helped (in a very small way) with the development of the locomotive, loaning models, drawings and photographs during the process. The models were of the locos in BR condition, representing examples towards the end of their lives; just as I saw them at Manchester London Road, working outer suburban services; the same jobs for which they were designed. This time, without a 'clash of interests', I think I can comment on this new manifestation, because it represents a member of the class at the start of its life.

Designed for the Great Central Railway by J. G. Robinson, the class was introduced in 1911, adopting the name 'Coronation Tanks' after the accession of King Edward the 7th. They were classified as 9N by the GCR and were used almost exclusively to begin with on fast suburban services to and from Marylebone. 21 were built at Gorton between 1911 and 1917, and a further 10 after the Grouping in 1923, by which time they became LNER Class A5. The numbers were increased when 13 more were built in 1925/26 by Hawthorn, Leslie Co., to a slightly different design for service in the North East. It took British Railways in 1948 to recognise the differences, the originals becoming A5/1 and the later builds A5/2. They did all that was asked of them for almost half a century, working eventually over much of the LNER system, often preferred to more modern types. All had gone by 1960, with, sadly, none preserved.

This latest iteration shows a loco in (almost) original condition, in full (and very elegant) GCR regalia. The taller boiler fittings are (correctly) fitted, as is the top feed and the cab with no side windows. Also present (correctly) is the wheel & handle device for closing the smokebox door. These details disappeared or were altered down the years, and were correctly represented by Sonic in the firm's earlier releases. This is a very fine model indeed, matching very closely against all the drawings and photographs I have at my disposal. The drive on the RH side is present (the A5/2s were driven from the left), and the header discharge valve is where it should be on the LH side of the smokebox. The model displays Ross pop safety valves, which suggests post-World War 1 condition. Originally, it would have had four-column Ramsbottom valves in a casing. Yeadon suggests these were retained until the Grouping, but contradictory evidence is provided by Irwell – the pitfalls for the researchers! There are many separate detail fittings, all perfectly fixed

For once, body removal is dead easy for a current RTR locomotive.



All-wheel pick-ups make perfect contact with the rear of the drivers.

in place. The buffers are sprung. The livery application is exquisite, and fully up to the highest standards I've seen by many professional model painters. Was there ever a more-elegant colour scheme applied to a British locomotive?

Performance is exemplary, with perfect running through a wide range of proprietary and hand-built pointwork. A powerful five-pole motor provides plenty of traction to be able to haul just about any train. Installation for DCC is dead easy, the body coming away from the chassis (after undoing just three screws) far easier than several RTR steam-outline locos I've assessed of late.

There are the usual extra bits and pieces provided for the owner to fit if required, including brake rigging, pipework and separate lamps. The last-mentioned are a huge improvement on what has gone before.

Available exclusively through Rails of Sheffield, it is thoroughly recommended.

FACTFILE

Models (reviews items in bold):
S4101-04A Robinson A5 (GCR Class 9N) 4-6-2 LNER GCR Green No.5372
S4101-01A Robinson A5 (GCR Class 9N) 4-6-2 GCR Great Central Green No.372
S4101-07A Robinson A5 (GCR Class 9N) 4-6-2 BR Black (Early Emblem) No.69827
S4101-08A Robinson A5 (GCR Class 9N) 4-6-2 BR Black (Late Crest) No.69814
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic body
Weight: 340g
Era: 1911-1923
Price: £149.95
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Brake rigging, pipework and separate lamps

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Overall accuracy
✓ Haulage ability
✓ Beautiful livery

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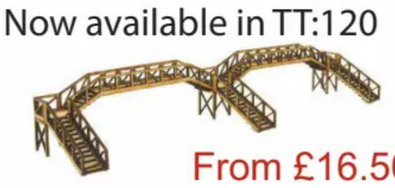

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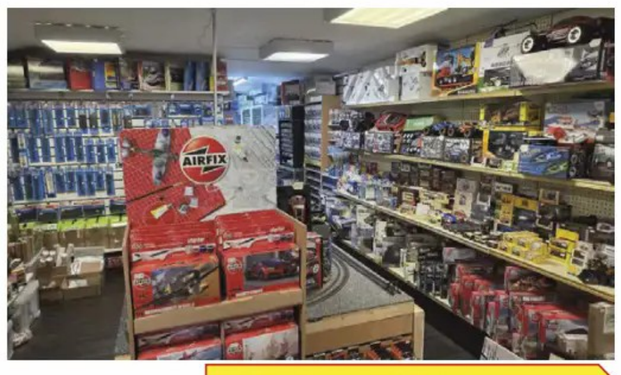

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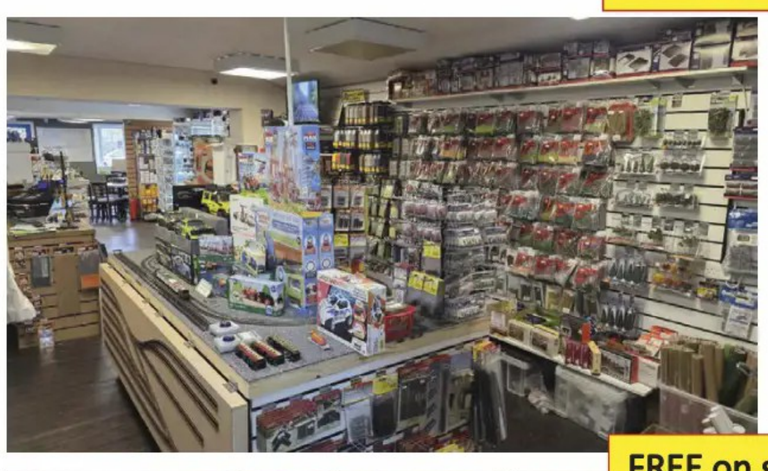

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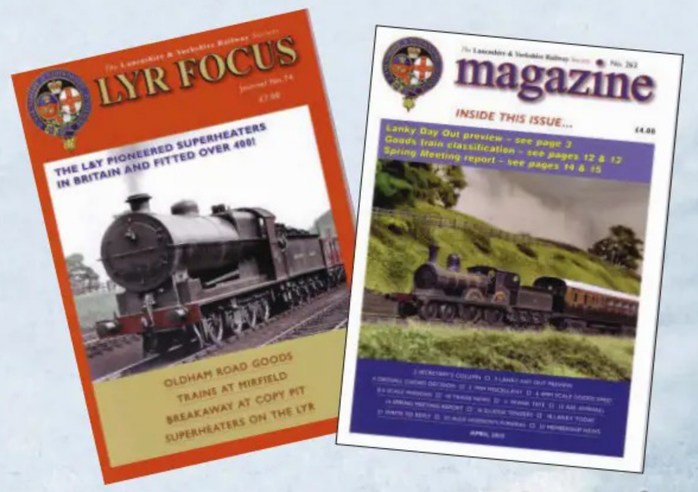

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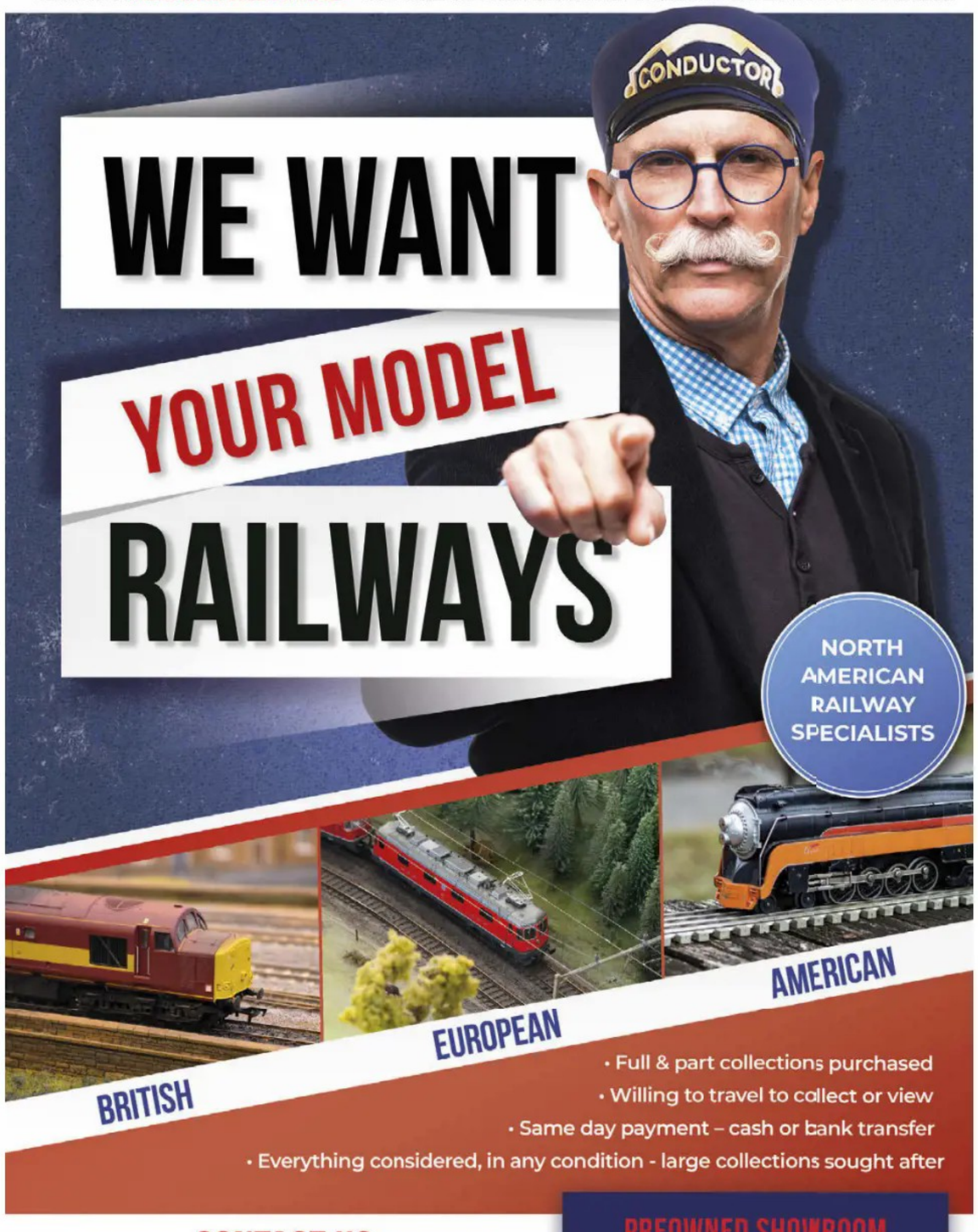

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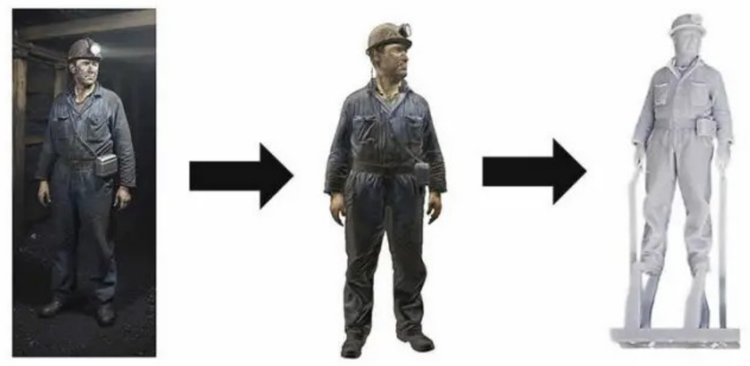

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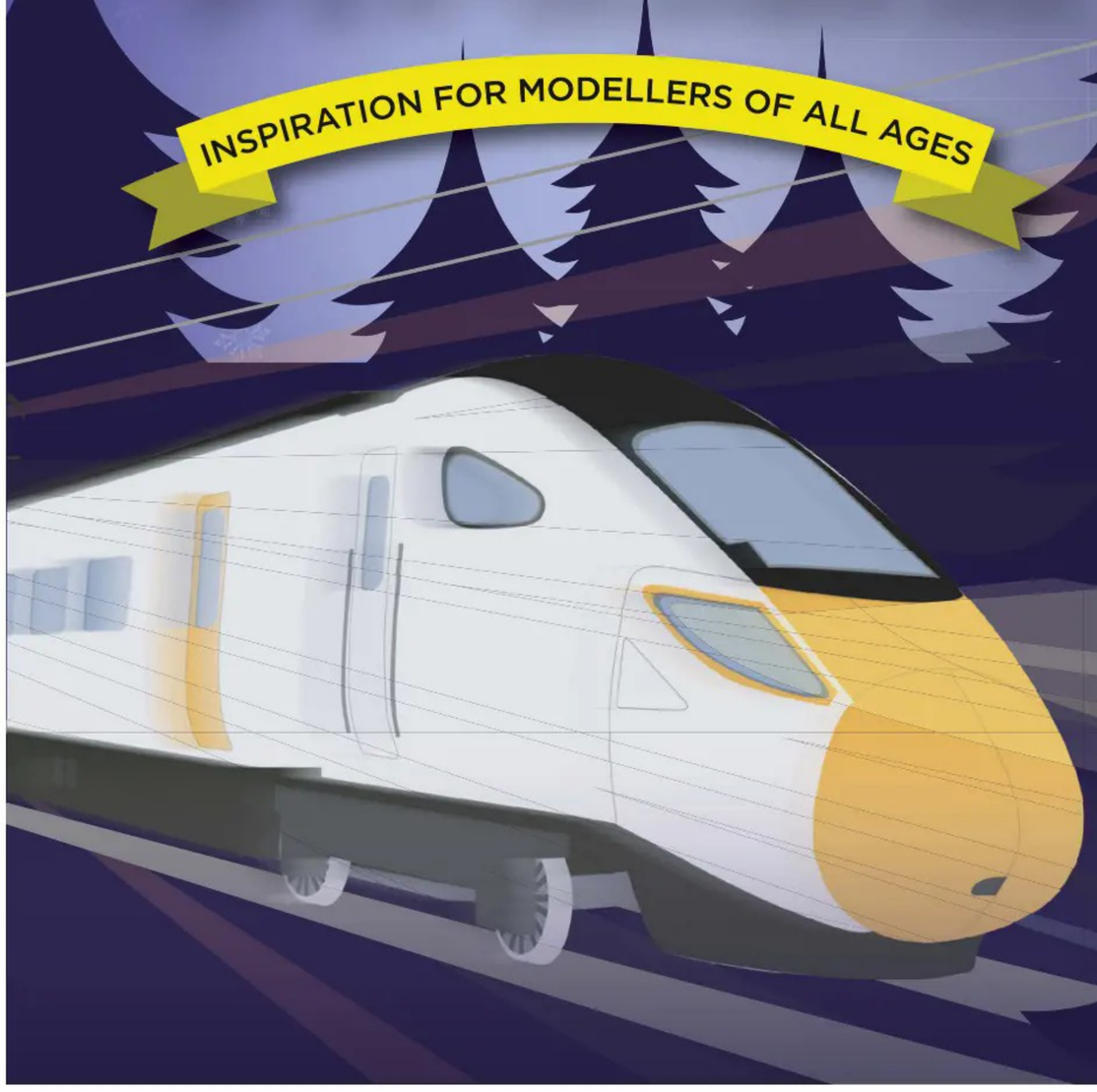

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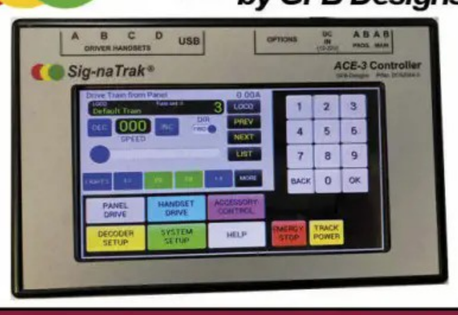

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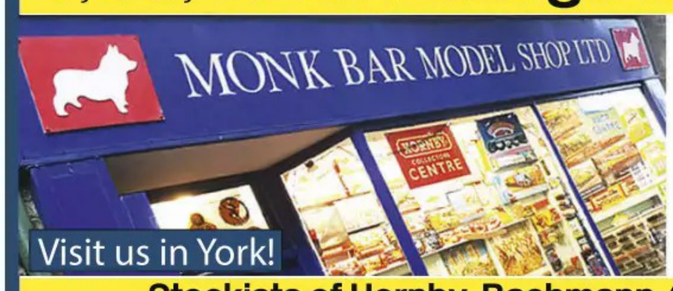

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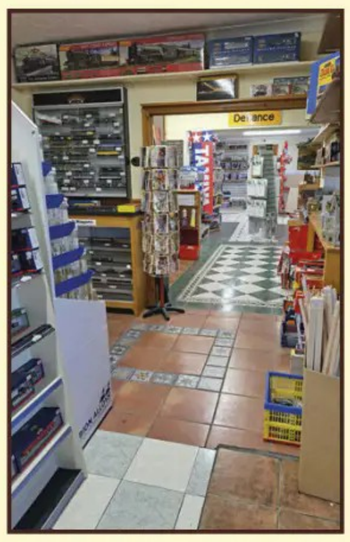

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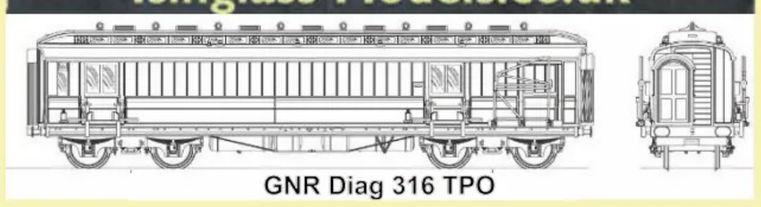

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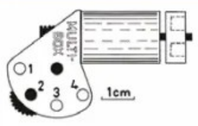

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Buffer Stop

This month in pictures

No space for a model railway? Here's a little layout on the 009 Society stand that is smaller than this magazine!

Rapido Railex saw Phil trying to persuade Andy at Rapido trains that it was time for someone to produce a new version of the classic Tri-ang Giraffe car. He wasn't convinced.

Little Phil takes a look at big Phil's latest 16mm scale model of a Hudswell Clarke locomotive – built from a kit costing less than 50 quid.

Between chocolate tasting sessions, Debbie did a little tram spotting in Brussels.

Steven enjoys an update on the latest models from Revolution Trains at the International N Gauge Show. Look out for the video on World of Railways soon.

Who can resist the appeal of "Happy Train"? A couple of stick-on eyes and someone saved it from the scrap bin...

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IT'S SHOW TIME

The must-attend event of the year for railway modelling fans is back!

Welcome to our second year at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham - are you ready for a weekend of jam-packed model railway entertainment?

Once again, we have over 60 fantastic layouts for you to enjoy, covering a wide range of scales and gauges, from the UK and around the world. If you have money burning a hole in your pocket, or have Christmas shopping to sort, there's plenty of inspiration here this weekend and bargains to be found, with big-name manufacturers in attendance, as well as some smaller traders with those harder-to-find products.

You can also enjoy the free ride-on train, games, hands-on modelling advice and competitions, plus our World of Railways Stage, new for 2025, which includes panel discussions and Q&As with well-known names in the hobby, plus some modelling advice and practical demonstrations from our BRM contributors – all included in your ticket price.

To help make your life easier navigating around the show, we've included a floorplan and an A-Z stand listing inside this guide.

Don't forget to pay a visit to the World of Railways stand. We love meeting readers at exhibitions and the team is here to provide you with advice, keep you informed with our latest new releases and offer you a great subscription deal, so make sure you pop by.

Enjoy the show!

WITH THANKS

This show would not have been possible without the help of the fantastic clubs listed below. Special thanks must go to Tom Cunnington at The MRC for his help in coordinating the marshals for the event.

Birmingham Model Railway Club
Cradley Heath Model Railway Club
Doncaster and District Model Railway Club
Friends of Buxton RailEx
Nailsea and District Model Railway Club
Stevenage and District Model Railway Club
The CMRA
The Model Railway Club
Trent Valley Model Railway Society
Wyre Forest Model Railway Club

TRAIN GAME

NEW FOR 2025: Have a go at our brand-new game and see if you can win some great prizes – all you need to do is get a ball in the wagon, but be warned…it is not as easy as it looks!

THE WORLD OF RAILWAYS STAGE

NEW FOR 2025: The World of Railways Stage will offer a number of presentations, modelling advice, layout videos and expert panels for all visitors to enjoy as part of their entrance ticket. Plan ahead and make sure you don't miss a thing...

10.30am: Video: What's it like to own a 'real' locomotive? Rapido's Andy Hardy reveals all.
11am: Social climbers: YouTuber panel discussion
11.30am: Video: Layout of a lifetime: Take a tour of Tony Wright's 'Little Bytham'
12pm: Budget Modelling: Revamping second-hand stock with Tony Wright
12.30pm: Video: Building and enhancing a Metcalfe Card Kit by Phil Parker
1pm: Weathering Wagons. Simple methods for great effects by Steven Draper
1.30pm: Video: Garden Rail visits The Olive Mount Tramway
2pm: A beginner's guide to 3D-printing with Chris Mead
2.30pm: Life After Hornby. Q&A with Simon Kohler
3pm: Trade Panel: your questions answered
3.30pm: Video: Accurascale

*The schedule remains the same both days, but some presenters and panel guests will change.

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30 Details on next year

FREE TRAIN RIDE!

Sponsored by Accurascale, this ride is the perfect way to immerse yourself into the world of model railways while enjoying the thrill of a real miniature train ride! A beautifully crafted locomotive running on Steve Purves' 'There and Back Light Railway' offers an exciting ride for all ages. Take as many turns around the hall as you like – it's completely free for all visitors!

HIRE A STEP STOOL!

Give children a better view of the layouts by borrowing a children's step stool from the MRC Test Track, stand L63, for a returnable deposit of £3.
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Sunday: 10:00am-4:30pm (9:30am pre-books)

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LAYOUT LISTINGS

From the rolling hills of Exmoor to a busy cement works in the 1950s and a Samurai heritage village, we have something for every taste and every scale at the show this year. Over the two days, there will be over 60 layouts to watch and enjoy – how will you fit them all in?

See our floorplan on page 22 to find your favourites.

L38

Andrews Yard
O

This fictional layout is set in the late-1930s, where Great Weston Railway engines are collecting and dispatching wood and coal to the yards nearby. You will also see the odd British rail engine running in and out. The details really bring this layout to life, which is also due to appear in BRM very soon.

L14

Ashover Butts
OO9

The latest immersive tabletop layout from David Wright features another composition of the Ashover Light Railway, this time modelling the railway that went to 'Where the Rainbow Ends'. David's layouts always leave a lasting impression and Ashover Butts is no exception.

L11

Barley End
O

Dale Gillard's latest O gauge layout is based around the 1970s and features a rural country halt, which receives barley by rail and is transferred to road to deliver to the local mill. The focal point of the layout is a busy warehouse, awaiting the delivery of this cire produce.

L55

Beijiao
HO

The only large Chinese HO layout on the exhibition circuit, this atmospheric railway is set in 2001, a time when there were still several steam-powered industrial railways and a few remaining pockets of China Rail steam operation. An exciting, seasoned layout that never fails to draw a crowd.

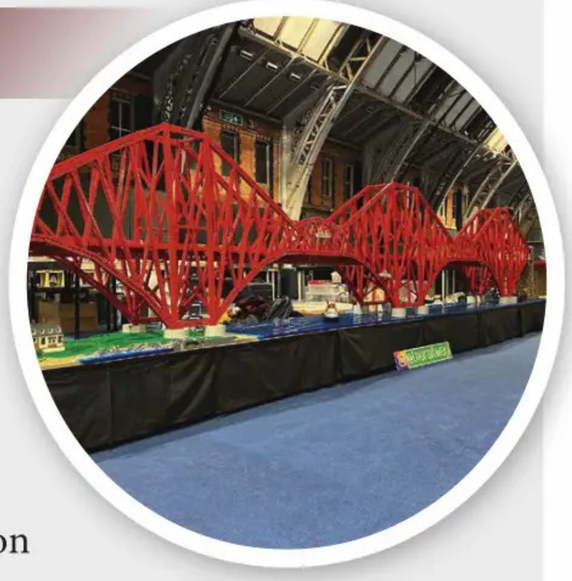
L58

Blowers Green Wagon Repair Yard
O

Based on a former wagon repair works in Birmingham and set in the period 1965 to the early 1980s, this popular layout by Bill Connelly was designed to show that a 7mm finescale layout can be more than just a shunting plank.

L18

Brick Coast Main Line
L



Further extended with some impressive new scenic features, Brick Coast Main Line represents many real-life locations such as Stonehenge, GCR's Rothley station, Locomotion Museum in County Durham, and Newcastle's High-Level Bridge, all reimagined with LEGO bricks.

L15

Camelot
TT:120

Dipping his toe in this new gauge for the first time brought many challenges for this builder, who relished the opportunity to create this exhibition-worthy tabletop layout, set in the busy post-War British Rail era, leading into era 5 on the LNER/Eastern.

L62

Crimson Road
OO

Inspired by his daily commute into central Birmingham, Peter Griffiths' layout offers a plethora of liveries, where old and new diesels dominate the rails. A hugely popular layout when it featured in BRM in 2024, one not to miss.

L7

Dawlish Warren
N

Capturing Dawlish Warren station in all its glory before the old station buildings were demolished. It is a lovely day in the picturesque South Devon; the sun is shining and the sea is blue. One for your list to enjoy watching the trains go by; we certainly will be lineside!

L37

Deadmans Lane
OO

Take a stroll down Deadmans Lane in Derby and you will encounter a sign for the East Midlands Trains Etches Park depot. This colourful layout portrays the workings of a busy depot and the adjacent main line with the passing trains over the past 3-4 years.

L6

Donaghadee Railway Station
OO

Donaghadee is a picturesque town on the north east of the Ards peninsula in Northern Ireland. From the 1600s, it was the main trade route from Portpatrick in Scotland to Ireland and was known as 'the gateway to Ulster' for the Scottish settlers.

L31

Donnersbachkogel
HO

Donnersbachkogel is a freelance Austrian layout, located somewhere in the pre-alpine area. The old station building is also the terminus of a narrow-gauge line, which, in the past, used to get minerals from a remote mine to the main line.

L51

Dunsfold Road
OO

An idea was developed to model a secondary route on the outer edge of South West London as a link between Guildford and Horsham, including a small factory/ warehouse on the old station site, which is served by short Speedlink feeder services, and a branch that supplies a nearby airfield with aviation fuel.

L12

Eastgate Harbour
OO

This exciting layout is set in 1947, two years after the end of World War II and one year before the nationalisation of Britain's railways. There is still much military activity through the port, as well as civilian passenger traffic travelling to and from The Continent. Make sure you check out the cinema!

L35

Euxton Junction
OO

Preston and District Model Railway Society's challenge was to keep pace with changes on the railway during the build of this intricate model, which is the perfect layout to watch the trains go by and a popular choice for many exhibition goers.

L4

Exebridge
3MM

Paul Hopkins' fantastic layout depicts an idyllic spot on a small West Country cross-country railway line based around the River Exe, complete with a viaduct crossing the creek and river, operating in the changeover period in the 1960s from steam to diesel traction.

L27

Fair T Myddlin
OO

Set in an industrial area of the North of England during the 1950s/60s, this fictional layout is set around the town of Eckerslike and also the underground coal mine of Appen Colliery, a deep underground mine now controlled by the National Coal Board (NCB) following nationalization of the coal industry in 1947.

L54

Grantham
OO

No stranger to the exhibition circuit, Graham Nicholas' fantastic layout, 'Grantham', portrays the pride and pre-war optimism of the LNER. Sadly, the layout will very soon be retired, so you want to make sure you spend some time lineside while you have the opportunity.

L46

Hardwick Grange
OO

Based during 1957/58, when steam engines were beginning to be phased out and diesel locomotives were just starting to appear, Hardwick Grange depicts train workings typical of the Dukeries, a busy area in Nottinghamshire.

L63

Hassel Harbour Bridge O

Refreshed and out of retirement, this large O gauge layout from the Alsager Railway Association is always a popular sight at exhibitions around the country and, as the name suggests, features a fantastic bridge that must be seen.

L29

Ishinaka
N

Set in a large Japanese town, which has seen an upsurge in tourism, this fascinating layout from Norman Raven depicts a terminus station with tramway links and a Samurai heritage village. An unusual layout with stock rarely seen, it should definitely be on your hit-list for the weekend.

L61

James Street
N

One of the largest N gauge layouts on the exhibition circuit has grown even bigger! Famed for its loco movements, there is always something running at 'James Street'. This Midlands-based layout is operational-focused and a firm favourite with exhibition goers.

L16

Janes Creek
EM

An interest in shipping and a return to EM gauge sowed the seeds for this picturesque layout, which includes some impressive water effects and rigging details. A popular layout when featured in BRM earlier in the year, it is definitely worth a visit for both rail and boat enthusiasts.

L44

Kelvin Grove
OO

Not many layouts offer a look at both overground and underground operations, but this latest layout from The Corby and District Model Railway Society does just that, proving a hit with exhibition goers across the country. You can read all about Kelvin Grove in the current issue of BRM!

L43

Kingsfield
OO

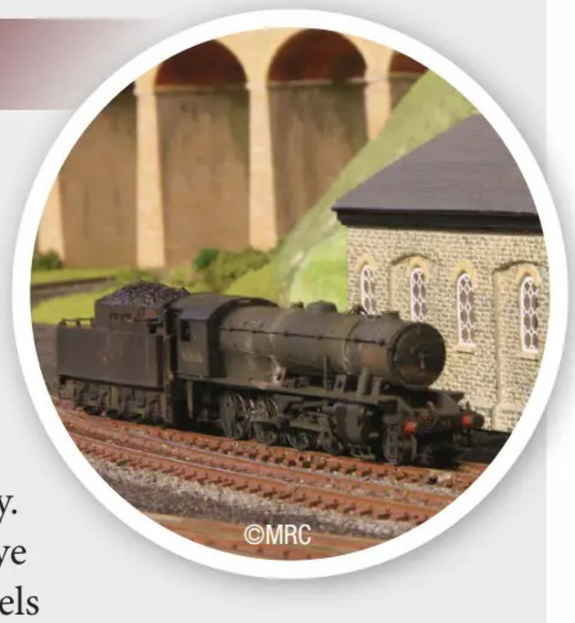
A seasoned club layout with more than 150 shows under its belt. This fantastic layout has been heavily influenced by Pendon Museum and gives us a snapshot of those important final days of steam. Full of scenic details, including a canal lock, lock keeper's cottage and an industrial/townscape setting.

L8

Kreuzweg
HOM

Deliberately conceived as a practice model, this wonderful winter layout is set in the picturesque Swiss mountains. If you've got children with you, let them know that if the signal is green, the next train will come from the right, if it's orange, it will come from the left.

L28



Lacey Dale
OO

Inspired by the limestone valleys of the Derbyshire Peak District, Lacey Dale portrays a section of the old main line between London and Manchester via Derby. The line criss-crossed the river Wye on several viaducts and used tunnels to straighten the route through this winding valley.

L48

Lynnbach
OO9

Originally built to run his Heljan Manning Wardle, lan Arkley's new layout took on a life of its own, perfectly demonstrating that a limit on space doesn't mean cutting back on the detail. Featured in the previous issue of BRM, the picturesque scene is rarely seen at exhibitions.

L3

Market Bosworth
P4

One of the busiest stations on this jointly-owned line in pre-Grouping days, this wonderful layout offers us a look at days long forgotten and showcases some inspiring modelling and impressive rolling stock, with something always moving on display.

L47

Melangoose
OO

This modern-day Cornish layout depicts a line clinging to survival, mainly due to the Melangoose Mill English China Clay Works. It's a period of great change, with the veteran Class 37s starting to be replaced by the EWS Class 66s. Passenger trains are in the hands of Class 150 & 153s.

L10

Middleton Top OO

Who doesn't love a layout based on the Peak District and the Cromford High Peak? Justin Dean's latest creation recreates the rugged wilderness of our ancient national park to perfection. One to add to your watch list!

L24

Millthorpe Light Railway OO9

This fictitious 009 layout, set in the Peak District, is run as a preserved railway, allowing a good variety of rolling stock. There are numerous cameo scenes around the layout, often centred around farming activities, along with some very realistic sounds.

L17

Mitchell Junction OO

I'm sure few of us can forget the vandalism attack on the Market Deeping Model Railway Exhibition in 2019, which resulted in an outcry from the modelling community, with donations flooding in from every corner of the UK. Here is the finished result of the first donation…

L30

Navigation Road EM

A popular choice within the BRM team, this slice of North East London, circa 1971, part of the Eastern Region of British Rail, was the perfect location to allow a realistic selection of pre-Tops locomotives from all four British Rail English Regions.

L41

Nazareth Portland Cement N

Based on the cement manufacturing industry of North East Pennsylvania in the USA, this exciting layout is set in the early 1970s and features contemporary railroad equipment. Operation is intense and continuous, and highly enjoyable for the viewer.

L13

NCMA & LMM Modular OO

Based on the operation of a typical modern heritage railway in the UK, which gives the option to run a wide variety of stock, this layout's modular construction allows the railway to be assembled in a large number of configurations.

L22

Newcastle By The Water N

This four-track line, which has dedicated passenger and freight lines, showcases a wide range of modern rolling stock, not to mention a Formula One racing car display, which is being held in the town to coincide with market day.

L34

Oulton Road OO

A favourite on the exhibition circuit, this extensive OO layout features a wealth of impressive industrial and railway features, including an oil terminal, served by regular trains of TTA and TEA tank wagons.

L57

Pencader
EM

Showing Pencader station and its environs as it was in the 1930s, as a major center for trade in cattle and sheep, with many of the animals being moved by train, this picturesque EM model from The Cardiff 4mm Group is a firm favourite.

L39

Penrhyn Quarries
10MM:1FT

Inspired by the slate mines of northern Wales, this wintry scene comes packed with atmosphere and includes a frozen waterfall and snow-covered landscapes, plus scratch-built slate buildings inspired by the historic Caernarvonshire railways.

L20

Portishead TMD
OO

Based on the Portishead Railway, if it had remained open and developed into a modern DB/ EWS and DRS Depot, this crowd-pleaser hosts a wide range of full sound locomotives and rolling stock. The layout is fully weathered, with full working yard lights, workshop lights and signals.inspection pits.

L9

Rampage
OO

This robot-themed futuristic creation from renowned sci-fi modeller Laurie Calvert is sure to be a big hit with the kids. The action never stops, as the Space Marines guard the complex and the smoke pours out from the generator.

L52

Renwick
O

Representing the fictional terminus of two branch lines, one leaving the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway at Brampton Junction, and the other from the Settle and Carlisle Railway at Lazonby, this layout showcases some fantastic stock during 1900 to 1908 on the North Eastern Railway.

L53

Richmond
N

Peter Brown is known for his picturesque layouts and architectural craftsmanship, and this award-winning model, where every building is scratch-built and based on actual Richmond buildings, will leave a lasting impression and is sure to inspire many of us, too.

L36

Shadows Of Exmoor NG7

This wonderful new layout is based on the narrow gauge line between Lynton & Barnstaple in Devon and weaves its way among the rolling hills on the edge of Exmoor to the popular town of Lynton.

L23

Sharnbrook Summit OO

This busy stretch of the Midland Main Line provided the perfect mix of scenic backdrop and interesting train formations for The Kettering and District Model Railway Club's next exhibition layout.

L50

Shelfie 2
OO

Part of a series of layouts named Shelfie, number two in the series has a varied history, being an urban station and then switching to rural Northumberland at a village called Guyzance and is a coal disposal point, set in the 1970s to 1980s.

L2

Shepherdswell EKR
OO

Set around the time that the Kent mainlines were electrified, both steam and diesel locomotives can be seen on this near-prototype model of the old Colonel Stephens line, which lasted into nationalisation.

L40

Smalldale Quarry
N

Based on a small village situated between Buxton and Chapel-en-le-Frith, just east of Dove Holes, the prolific Alsager Railway Association debuts its latest build, which majors on operational activity and impressive scenic modelling.

L56

Splott
P4

We are big fans of Paul Spencer's fantastic 1980s industrial layout set in South Wales. It comes packed with action and small cameo details, which will keep surprising you every time you pay a visit and set the industrial tone of the layout perfectly.

L5

Strood Dock
O

Recreating a flavour of what the original South Eastern Railway's North Kent Line to Strood could have been if the old station had remained in use, busy operations make this O gauge layout a joy to watch in action. Make sure you look out for the Clyde Puffer!

L26

Sunshine from the Cotswolds
OO

One for nostalgia! Laid with Hornby Dublo 3-Rail track, this layout is complemented with pre-war wooden buildings made in 1938 or 1939! All the locomotives and rolling stock were also made in the 1940s and 1950s by Hornby Dublo.

L28

Test Tracks
N/A

The Model Railway Club test tracks are a familiar feature of shows at the NEC – with multiple gauges from N to O, available with both DC and DCC control – to test run your latest purchase, or something you've brought along to show a friend.

L1

The Classic Novels of Agatha Christie
OO

This entertaining layout brings the literary and model railway worlds together to form a one-of-a-kind layout featuring a flying plane, moving delivery lorry, cruising Nile River boat, full lighting, working semaphore signals and level crossing gates, as well as a working avalanche!

L33

The Ridings
G1

Gauge 1 sits where railway modelling and model engineering meet. A major interest is the construction and running of live steam locomotives, powered by liquid fuel, gas, or coal, many of which will be in operation during the show.

L59

Tinker Lane
OO

This shunting yard between Sheffield and Rotherham, dating from around 1975-1987, sees a lot of action, predominantly from BR Blue diesels and new Railfreight locomotives just being released into traffic.

L45

Underground Ernie
OO

A fun layout for children and adults alike, there is the opportunity for hands-on control by pushing buttons and making characters move, including Paw Patrol, Winnie the Pooh, Snow White, Peter Rabbit, Tintin, Doctor Who and Peppa Pig to name but a few.

L60

Venture Park OO

HSTs galore! Venture Park is a fictional traction and rolling stock servicing depot on the Midland Main Line near Kettering, Northamptonshire. Set sometime in the early 2000s, Midland Mainline HST stock rules the roost at Venture Park, although DMUs and other coaching stock are also present.

L25

Warton Road
G3

Warton Road is an exhibition standard railway modelled to Gauge 3 standards. It depicts a 'might have been' where a preservation society has taken over the running of a branch line closed as part of the 1960s Beeching rationalisation programme.

L49

Whittlesmarch
OO

Set in the 1950/'60s on the outskirts of a large cement works, where trains are loaded with outgoing cement and incoming supplies are brought onto site. It connects directly to the mainline, but is operated by internal Blue Circle cement locomotives.

L42

Wimborne
OO

This third iteration of the south-westerly location is jam-packed when it comes to action! There is always something going on, and a great layout for the train-spotters among us, with so many different locomotives that would have been seen at Wimborne during the 1950s/early 1960s.

L21

Wiveliscombe
OO

A stunning representation of the station of that name on the Devon and Somerset Railway (The Taunton to Barnstaple Line), the layout is set in the later years of the station's life when it was operated under the BR(W) banner.

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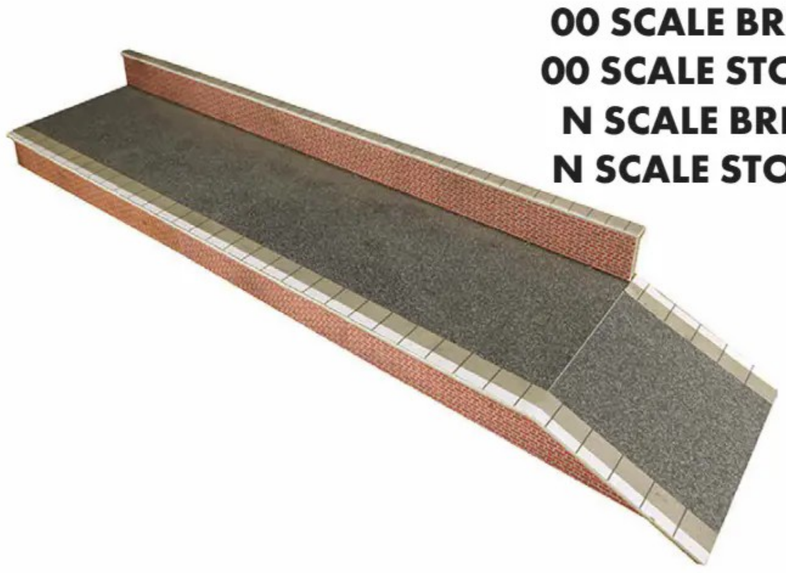

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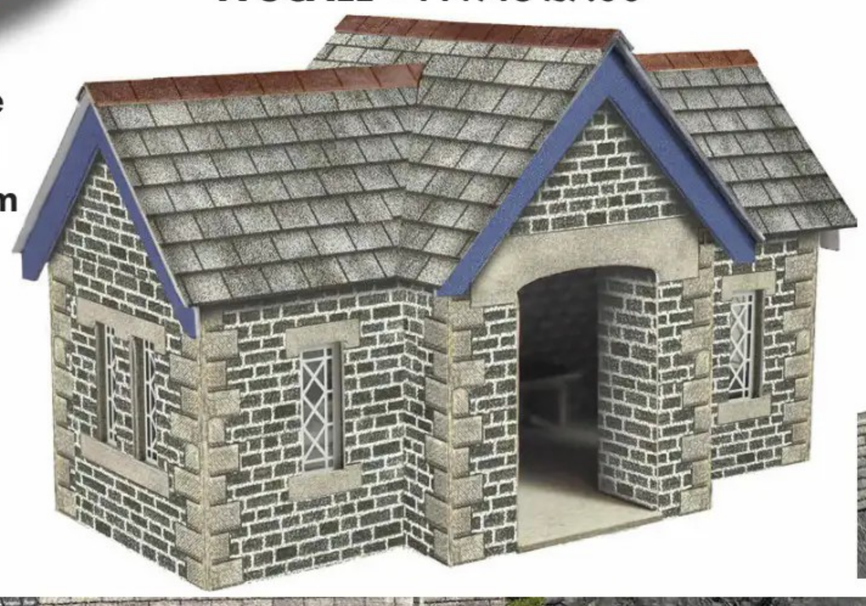

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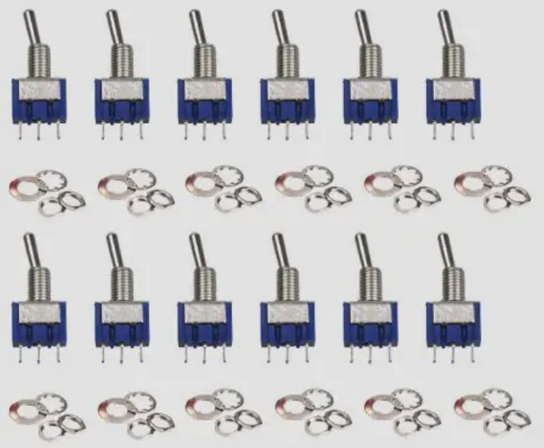

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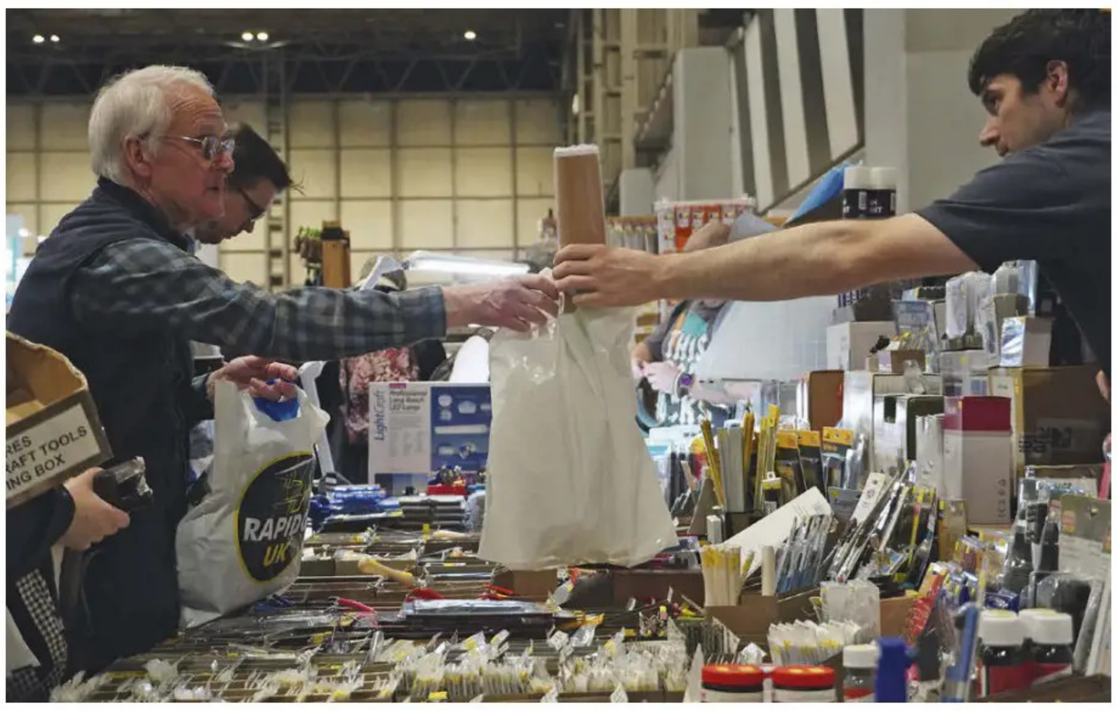

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Stand 116

DCC concepts thinking outside the square

One of our new sponsors for 2025, DCC Concepts will be showcasing its innovative range of products and would love to have a chat with you about the new and exciting things coming up in 2026.

Stand 28

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We're delighted to have Metcalfe returning as a show sponsor for 2025. Its fantastic kits will be widely available across the show from members of its retail network, including two brand new kits, which will be ready just in time for the show. Watch our very own Phil Parker complete a build of one of the kits in a video presentation on the World of Railways Stage – see timetable on page 4.

FOOTPLATE

Another new sponsor for 2025, Footplate will be bringing along its ever-popular Pre-Owned Jamboree, which will be packed with quality models at great prices. Whether you are hunting for a rare gem, adding to your layout, or just after a bargain, there will be plenty to explore.

Stand 36

RAPIDO TRAINS UK

Rapido's stand will be the usual hive of activity, a chance to meet the team and see some exciting project updates. There will also be a surprise exhibit that you won't want to miss, plus you will have a chance to ask members of the team questions as they take part in our Trade Panel on the World of Railways Stage – see the timetable on page 4 for more details.

Stand 25

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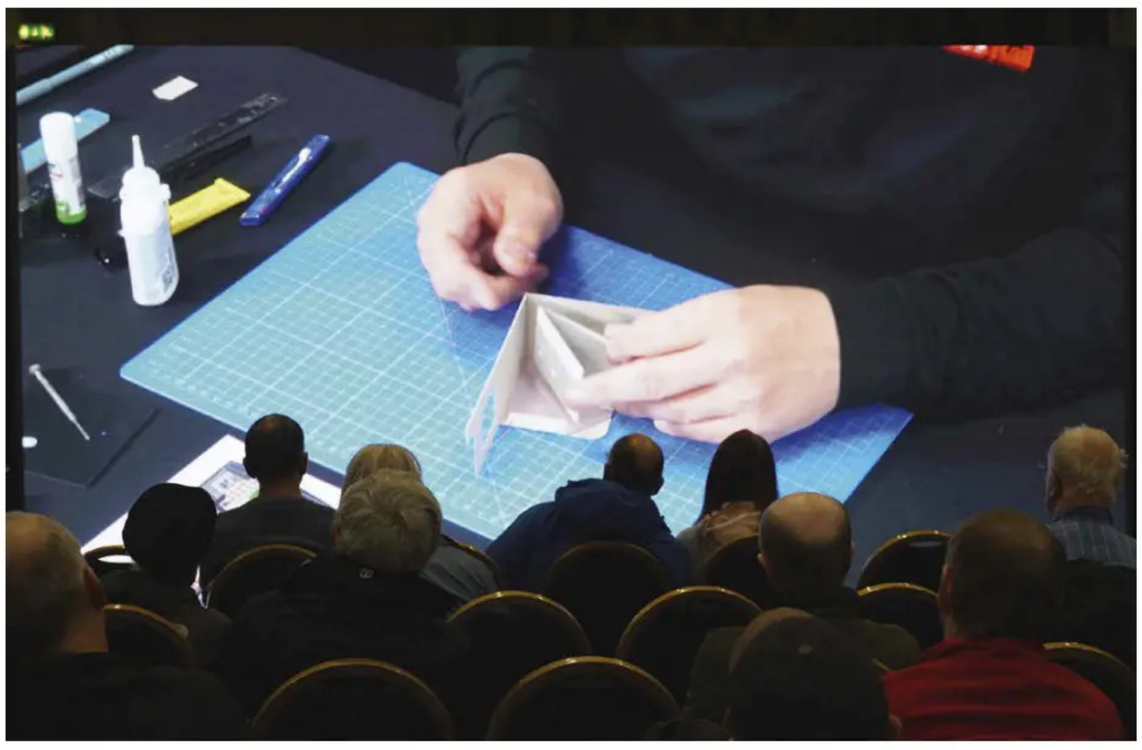
Stand 41

DEMONSTRATIONS

Model Tree Construction Demo (Jacqui Perrat)
Need help with your tree making? The Model Tree Construction Demo by Jacqui Perrat is here to help. Offering general techniques for constructing realistic model trees, including working with wire, trunk shaping, and adding texture and variety, Jacqui will be on hand over the weekend to offer you some top tips and advice.

Tony Wright's loco clinic
Renowned modeller, Tony Wright, will not only be at the World of Railways Stage offering tips for renovating models, he will also be running his clinic and will be more than happy to look at your faulty model trains and repair them if possible, in return for a small donation to charity. If you've been following Tony's excellent 'Budget Modelling' series in BRM, the renovated models will also be available to purchase for a donation.

Chris Mead
His excellent scenic work always causes a stir in BRM, and, as well as talking us through the first steps of 3D printing on the World of Railways Stage, he will also be showcasing his most recent projects, plus will be on hand to answer any modelling questions you have. The swimming pool on his stand is definitely worth a look!



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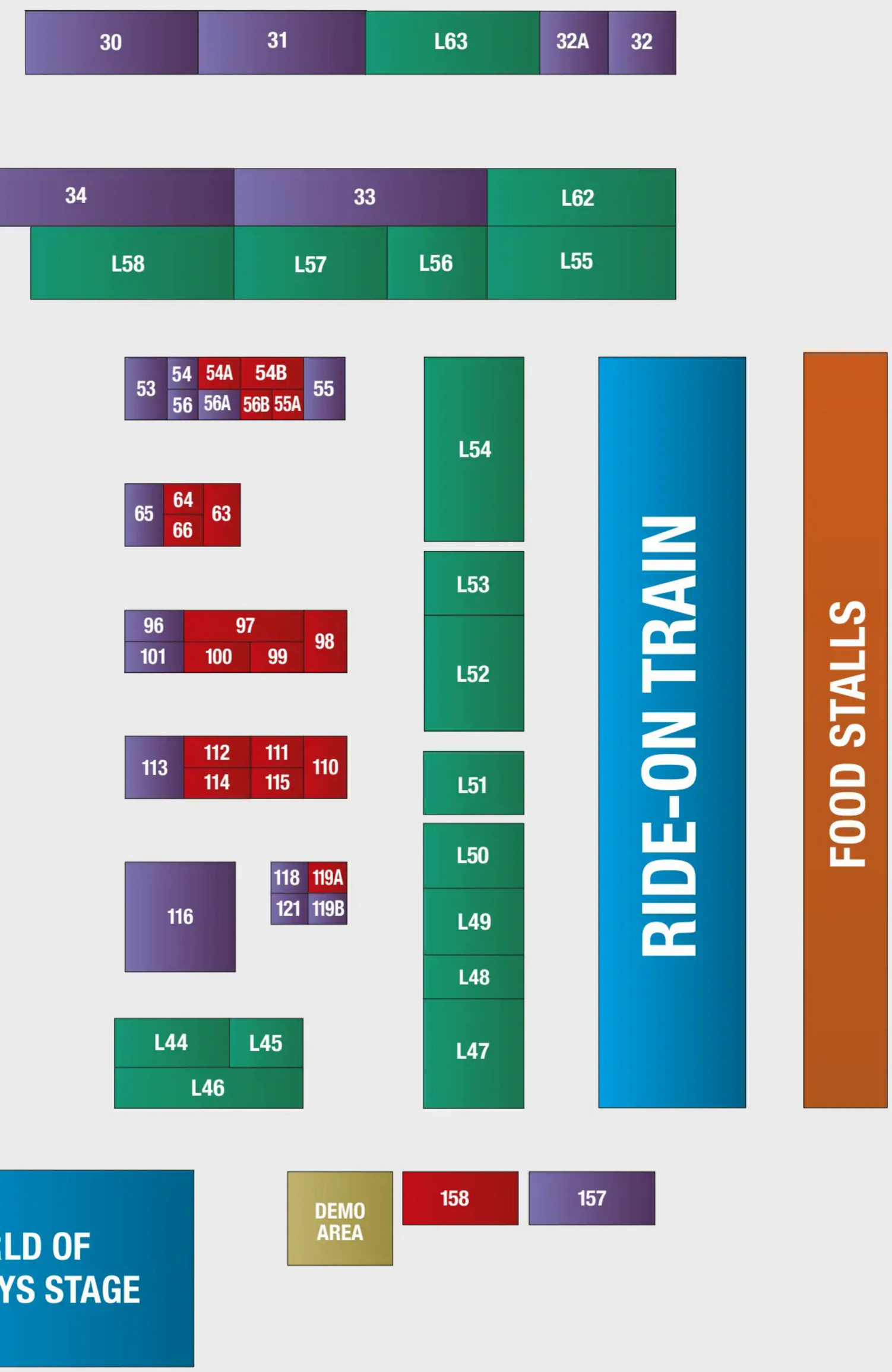

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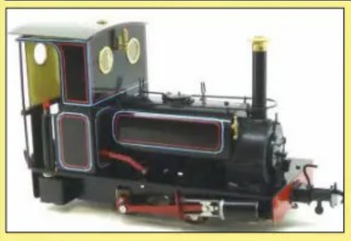

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Cover: Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch' bursts out from under the bridge at Rhydyronen on the Talyllyn Railway on 13th October. The Talyllyn is entering a year of celebration for both the railway and railway preservation as a whole, which began 75 years ago in 1950 – we were exclusively invited to join the first of the planned events, which we describe in ths issue.
The inset shows two of the locos on one of the newest and least-known lines on the UK heritage scene, the Gunpowder Railway at Waltham Abbey – also described in the pages of this issue.
Photos: Andrew Simmonds and Nick Turner

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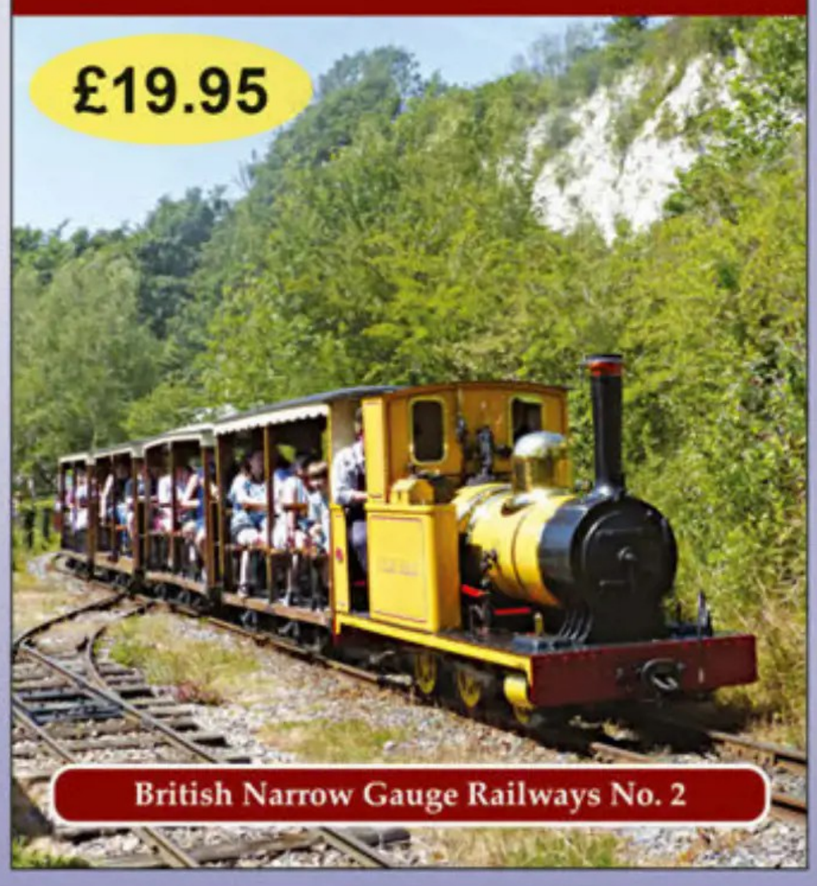

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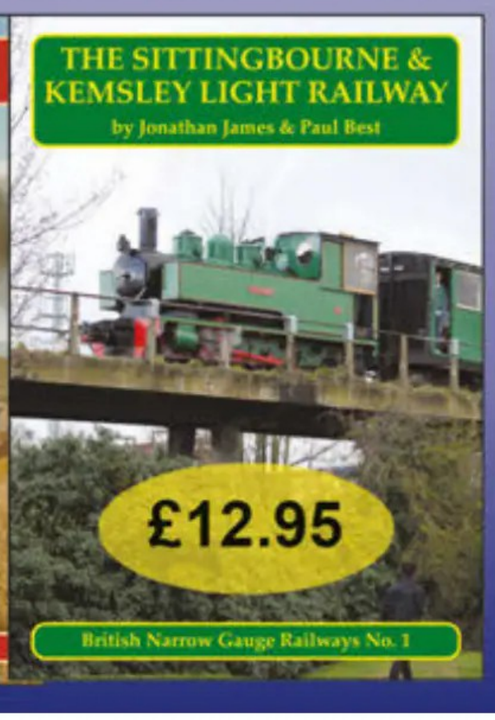

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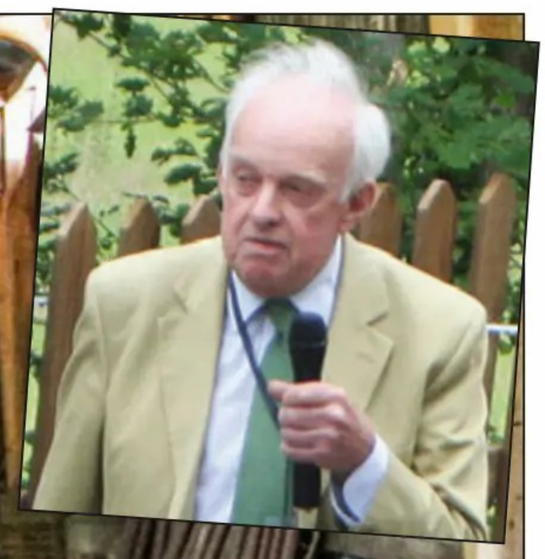


"The full extent of what Peter saved is becoming clear – without his efforts few, if any, of these locos would likely still exist..."

Above: Taken from *Narrow Gauge Enigma*, a small part of Collection X as removal from the Surrey farm began in 2023, with the Couillet 0-6-0T 'Sahelices No. 2' to the fore. The inset shows Peter Rampton on a rare public appearance at the Vale of Rheidol Railway in 2014. ***Main photo courtesy Stephen Phillips/VoR. Inset Andrew Charman***

Welcome to *NGW* 198 and I must start this issue with a note of congratulation – to the team responsible for the latest and most jaw-dropping new-build project we've seen for some time.

As you will read over the page, a private group is recreating a Hunslet NA/5 2-8-4 pannier tank, as built for the Dholpur State Railway in India – a truly monster loco which when finished has an agreement to run on the Welsh Highland Railway.

Remarkably this project has been underway for some three years, reaching the stage of a rolling chassis with cylinders cast and the boiler under construction, with virtually no-one outside the small team doing the build knowing about it – well done to them for completely evading the prying eyes of journos such as myself. They reckon in three years it could be running, which will certainly be a sight...

Don't let me be...

Misunderstood... this issue features two names that such a phrase could be applied to, firstly Peter Rampton, who many readers will recognise as the man behind 'Collection X', one of the largest narrow gauge mysteries of the past 50 years.

The Collection X title came from the fact that Peter gathered a huge variety of narrow gauge locos from around the world and stored them on his Surrey farm, out of public gaze with outsiders firmly refused access – something earning criticism from enthusiasts over many years.

Peter died in 2019 and now the full story of a man who truly was a narrow gauge enigma has been told in an excellent new book, which we review on page 44. I reckon reading this will lead many to re-assess his actions and to appreciate his role in narrow gauge preservation.

The heyday of his collecting was in the 1970s and '80s, mostly of locos outside the UK that then attracted little attention with much to occupy enthusiasts on the British scene. Had he not acted then, a host of notable locos, many from British builders, would have gone for scrap.

Peter was a private man and the attitude of secrecy was stoked by early episodes with one or two so-called enthusiasts – we all know such people exist among our ranks. Author Stephen Phillips also suggests that a strong desire to return every item to working order was accompanied by both a quest for perfectionism and some naivety at what is involved in loco restoration. And he was also heavily distracted by the Vale of Rheidol Railway, which over many years he quietly poured massive investment into, transforming it from a run-down BR branch to the superb line it is today.

Collection X is now emerging into public gaze and the full extent of what Peter saved becoming clear – without his efforts few, if any, of these locos would likely still exist.

No doubting Thomas

The second of our heroes is Thomas the Tank Engine – yes honestly. The little blue loco and the massive corporate giant that today lies behind him wins few friends among enthusiasts, who wince at the thought of smiley faces hung on the front of their favourite locomotives in the cause of family entertainment.

No doubt such enthusiasts will be horrified that the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust has gone down this route, but as you can read in this issue, they shouldn't be – in fact they should be welcoming it.

Without Thomas most children today would have no idea what a steam loco is, until they see one on a heritage railway – those born when steam ended on British Railways in 1968 are today in their late fifties.

Today's children would likely be less taken with heritage steam, if they hadn't been enthused by Thomas and his friends at a very young, impressionable age. That's vital because that first wave of enthusiasts from the pioneer days of preservation are lessening in number every year – and for our railways to survive they will need to be replaced.

Just as importantly, those lines won't be there to draw in young enthusiasts if they cannot afford to survive in today's ever more expensive world – Thomas weekends are one of the most effective ways of generating the revenue and exposure that railways need more than ever.

So please don't flick past pages 22 to 24 because they feature engines with faces – the message contained on them is pertinent to all of us...

Andrew Charman

Monster Hunslet new-build set to run on Welsh Highland

Indian ZA/5 pannier tank recreation already at rolling chassis stage with boiler construction underway.

A new-build version of one of the largest Hunslet narrow gauge locomotives ever built is set to operate on the Welsh Highland Railway (WHR), and could enter service in as early as 2028.

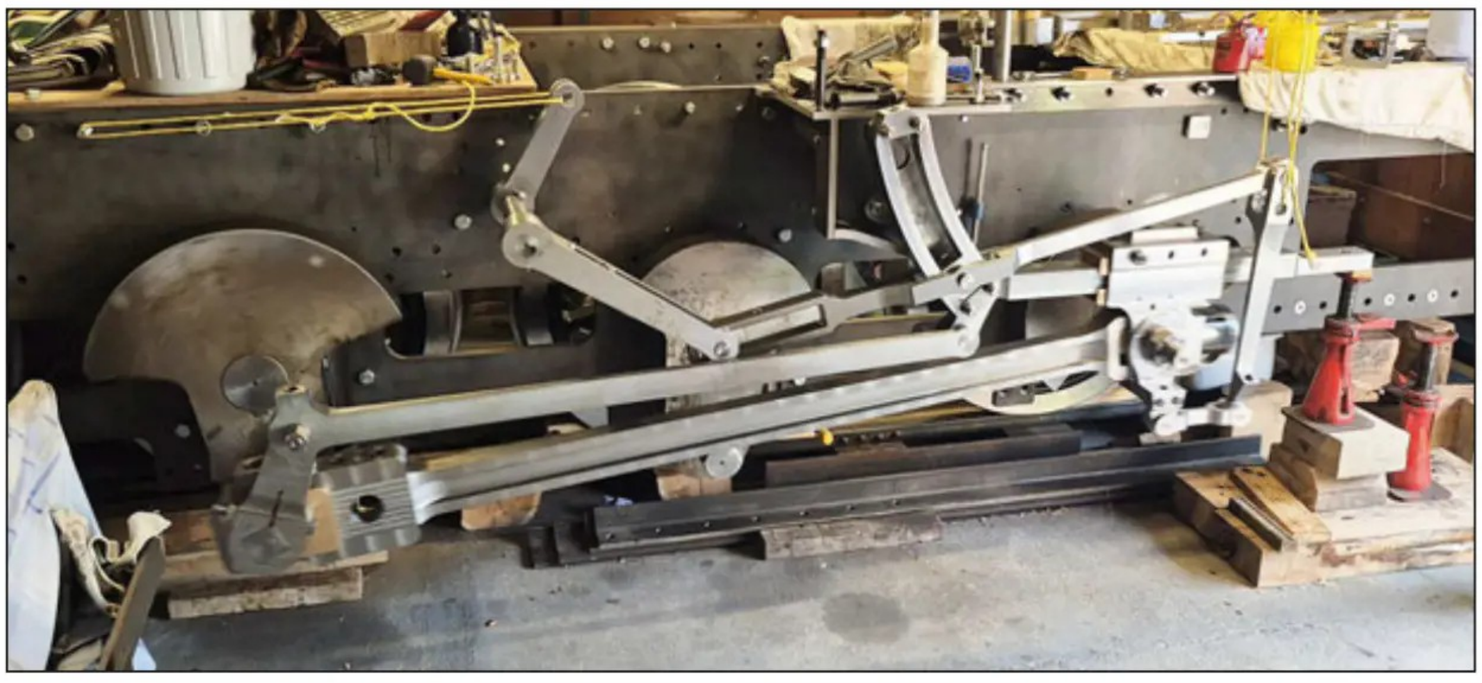
On 13th September, hours after a small ceremony for the former South African Railway NG15 2-8-2 recently returned to service on the WHR saw it officially given the name 'Kalahari', members of the Welsh Highland Railway Society attending the group's AGM were given details of the new-build project.

A small independent team in Somerset is constructing an 'improved' version of a Hunslet ZA/5 class 2-8-4 pannier tank, the final two of which were built in 1959 for the Dholpur State Railway in India.

Remarkably the build has been going on for some three years in complete secrecy, construction of the chassis taking place in an outbuilding at a private home. Already the loco is at the stage of a rolling chassis with wheelsets fitted and rods attached, the cylinders cast and building of the boiler well underway.

Project founder Jon Banfield and his friend Matt Fairweather have a long history in the 7¼-inch gauge miniature locomotive community, but have been keen to undertake a project in 2ft gauge, and having ridden on and been wowed by the Welsh Highland Railway they were equally keen that the loco would find a use on the north Wales line.

On searching for a suitable prototype both were taken with the enormous Hunslet ZA/5 locos that ran on the 43-mile long Indian 2ft 6in gauge line, these being an evolution of a design originally built by



Top: A very big pannier tank – Hunslet ZA/5 no 809 on the Dholpur State Railway on 7th November 1978. ***Photo: Donald Brooks***

Above left: Proof that *NGW* is not trying to April fool its readers in the wrong month! Alan, Roger and Stuart, three of the volunteers who work on the project each Monday, with the completed rolling chassis.

Left: The motion has been fitted up and tested with the centre wheelset on a rolling road. ***Photos: Jon Banfield, ZA/6 project***

Kerr, Stuart before the Stoke-on-Trent company was absorbed by its Leeds rival.

There were five iterations of the ZA class, the final ZA5s switching from side to pannier tanks and weighing in at some 38 tons. They operated until the 1980s before being replaced by diesels – the line itself closed in 2023 despite plans to convert it to the Indian broad gauge of 5ft 6in.

Jon and Matt were able to access full working drawings for the loco from the Hunslet Archive which is now housed at the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust. From this they were able to redesign the loco to 2ft gauge and determine that it would fit the WHR loading gauge and be able to run satisfactorily on the line – the success of the eight-coupled NG15 Kalahari helped confirm this.

At this point Jon consulted Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway general manager Paul Lewin, to ask that if the loco was built, it could operate on the WHR. With a positive response from Paul, the build began in 2022, with FF&WHR chief mechanical engineer Jon Whalley also getting involved.

Advanced tech

The project has made plentiful use of new technology, one example being 3D printing of many casting patterns including for the wheels, while the overall design has incorporated advances made in locomotive engineering over the years. As a result the new loco will be designated a ZA/6 and will be numbered 815, the last steam loco ordered for the line being numbered 814.

"Basically we want to take the best aspects of steam locomotive design, such as long-travel piston valves, lempor exhausts and such, and mount them on the 2-8-4 chassis," Jon told ***NGW***. "The result should be a very efficient tank loco that might also have a turn of speed."

Heading for Wales

While the project is already a long way in, Jon emphasised there is still a great deal to do. Despite this, if no significant delays are experienced it is hoped that the completed running chassis will be transported to the FFWHR's Boston Lodge works in the Autumn of next year, where it will receive the boiler being built for it. The Somerset team will then concentrate on building the long pannier tanks and the cab, for mating with the chassis in late 2027.

If all goes to plan it has tentatively been suggested that the locomotive could first move under its own steam in the winter of 2027-28, with a potential entry into service on the WHR in 2028, though not surprisingly this is not a certainty.

NGW will of course follow the build closely and we plan to bring readers an in-depth feature on the ZA/6 new-build project in a forthcoming issue. Meanwhile the project has launched a website for the build at www.za6.co.uk – Jon added that there is little on the site

yet but it will be updated as the build

FR's Bygones weekend overcomes Storm Amy

The Ffestiniog Railway was the venue for another successful Bygones weekend on 3rd-5th October, despite the best efforts of the weather to disrupt the event.

The weekend which traditionally sees the line celebrating its heritage with the likes of Victorian-era train sets and staff and visitors in period wear, neatly coincided with the arrival in the UK of Storm Amy – the first storm of the winter season in Europe and a record-breaking cyclone that caused major damage and left three people dead in France and Ireland.

Regular ***NGW*** correspondent Steve Sedgwick attended the Bygones event and described the weather as extreme. "Winds exceeded 50mph and the rain at times was horizontal," he said. "Unsurprisingly, conditions were very uncomfortable for FR staff and volunteers – it was painful to be shotblasted in the face by such rain."

One of the gravity trains that have long been a feature of the Bygones weekend had to be cancelled on Saturday morning, having run on Friday. "Conditions for the crew were very harsh with heavy rain and high winds blowing in against them from the west – even without the weather, it is a hard ride on the unsprung, loose-coupled slate wagons," Steve said.

The railway also had to temporarily close its Victorian shopping village on Saturday due to fears for the marquees within which it was located at Porthmadog Harbour station.

Also feeling the worst of the conditions were the team manning the guest loco, the Stephen Lewin replica 'Samson' from Beamish Museum. Despite the weather and its lack of any cab the tiny loco, which is at the FR for the retubing of its boiler, did manage a trip up the line to Rhiw Goch.

The weather on Saturday proved slightly tamer, but according to Steve only just, but it did improve significantly on Sunday with milder conditions.

■ **See also Gallery pages**.

Above: The winds reached a peak on the afternoon of 3rd October – the double Fairlie 'James Spooner' was returning across the Cob with a short train of Victorian stock. Steve explained that the low visibility was not mist, but rain driven into a white horizontal frenzy by winds blowing at over 50mph.

Below: The crew of Beamish Museum's Stephen Lewin replica 'Samson' appeared to not be greatly enjoying themselves on the Friday of the event.

Photos: Steve Sedgwick

Horsepower drives TR heritage weekend

New horsepower came to the Talyllyn Railway on 13th-14th September when the line focused its annual Heritage Weekend on its slate history.

For the first time since 1946, the event saw a TR slate waggon moved by horse – this was a common sight in the days of the Bryn Eglwys quarry, horses being used to pull waggons along the level sections of the line's mineral section, such as between the Alltwyllt and Cantrybedd inclines.

Local company Carnog Working Horses, which has previously undertaken horse logging work in the area, supplied working horse Molly which hauled the wagon along a section of temporary track laid in the field below Abergynolwyn station.

Saturday's trains focused on the Talyllyn and Corris Railways in the pre-preservation era, employing original carriages from both railways and waggons from the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum, along with the newly recreated Gunpowder van built by the Talyllyn's Young Members Group (***NGW***197). The Group also conducted waggon hand-shunting demonstrations at Tywyn Wharf Station across the weekend.

Sunday was themed around the early preservation years of the TR including Corris Railway locos pulling Talyllyn original carriages, a diesel loco taking tipper wagons up the line as seen during the extension of the passenger line to Nant Gwernol in the 1960s and '70s, and a typical 1950s works train used when relaying the then poor condition track.

The event was also supported by Amgueddfa Lechi Cymri, the National Slate Museum as part of its 'Museum on the Move' programme, bringing staff, collections and stories to locations at the heart of the slate story communities. TR volunteers also presented talks on the Friday and Saturday evenings.

Above: TR volunteer David Rowbotham let Molly the horse provide the pulling power during the heritage event. ***Photo: Luke Ryan/TR***

Talyllyn to celebrate preservation's 75th

The Talyllyn Railway will stage a three-day Gala next year to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the mid-Wales 2ft 3in gauge line's first year as a heritage railway, which marked the birth of the railway preservation movement.

The Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society was formed at a meeting in Birmingham on 11th October 1950, five days after the line operated what was widely expected to be its final service following the death of owner Sir Henry Haydn Jones that July.

The TRPS aimed to preserve and run the railway for future generations and on 14th May 1951 operated its first public train, in the process kick-starting the global railway preservation movement.

That first train will be commemorated on 14th May 2026 by the running of a special service for invited representatives from various heritage railways, followed on 15th-17th May by a Gala described by organiser Luke Ryan as "A bumper event where the toys come out to play".

Themed as 'TR Best Hits' from across the years, each day of the Gala will feature recreations of iconic moments from across the TR's post-preservation era; Friday for the 1950s and 1960s, Saturday for the 1970s and 1980s and Sunday for the 1990s through to the present day.

The Saturday will also see the return of Overnight Steam to the Talyllyn for the first time in 11 years, steam-hauled services running throughout the night and straight through into Sunday morning.

The line will announce further details of the celebrations in the months leading up to the event.

The end that became a beginning – see page 38

Woody Bay is listed

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Woody Bay station is among seven rail structures that have been given Grade II listed status by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as part of the Railway 200 celebrations.

The Woody Bay listing covers the station building, former stable block and signal cabin, excluding its lever frame which is not original. The L&B now has two listed sites, Woody Bay and the Chelfham viaduct.

A spokesman for the L&B described the listing as testament to the foresight and dedication of the line's volunteers, supporters and staff over the last few decades. "We are also pleased that Historic England have acknowledged the role that narrow-gauge railways played in the development of the railways more widely across the UK," he added.

Left: Woody Bay, photographed here by *Dave Hallett* in 2015, now has the protection of listed status.

Three bow out but with hopes of swift returns

The end of the 2025 operating season sees three core steam locomotives reaching the end of their 10-year boiler tickets and being withdrawn for overhaul. However the Leighton Buzzard Railway-based Baldwin 4-6-0T No.778, the Ffestiniog Railway's double Fairlie 'Merddin Emrys' and Phil Mason's Amerton-based Kerr, Stuart 0-4-0T 'Diana' are not expected to be out of use for an extended period.

The 1917-built Baldwin, which was returned to steam at Leighton Buzzard in 2007, was set to make a final appearance before expiry of its ticket on 30th November during a special 26th October event at the Bedfordshire line. As part of the LBR's Halloween celebrations the day was expected to also feature vertical-boilered locos 'Taffy', visiting from Alan Keef Ltd and resident De Winton 'Chaloner', together with Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-0ST 'Peter Pan', back from its latest exploits in Belgium (see page 15).

"We aim to ensure the overhaul of No. 778 is undertaken as rapidly as possible," commented Cliff Thomas, chairman of the Greensand Railway Museum Trust that owns the Baldwin. "Our loco has been pulling LBR trains since 2007 and the trustees hope the required overhaul can be completed as quickly as possible to enable that to resume."

Finance could cause some delays to the overhaul and the Trust is welcoming contributions – these can be sent to the GRMT c/o Pages Park station at the Leighton Buzzard Railway, to be paid into a GRMT 778 restricted fund held by the railway.

Diana returned from its summer tour of heritage lines, featured in our previous two issues, in time for the mid-September Gala at the Amerton Railway where the loco is based. It too was due to have its final official day in steam on 26th October shortly before the expiry of its ticket.

Owner Phil Mason expressed hopes that the loco would not be out of action for long; "A year, maybe two, depending on what we find," he said.

Merddin Emrys, built by the Ffestiniog Railway in 1879, played its part in the line's weather-affected Bygones weekend on 3rd-5th October (see page 7) and worked a final train for staff and volunteers on Sunday evening before its withdrawal for overhaul, which began on the following day.

Above: Baldwin 778 has played a major role in events recalling War Department Light Railways. ***Photo: LBR***

Below: Double Fairlie 'Merddin Emrys' worked through less than ideal weather at the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones event. ***Photo: Karl Heath***

BRIEF LINES

Manx carriage on wheels

Restoration of former Manx Northern Railway carriage F37 passed a milestone on 16th October when the body of the carriage was reunited with its chassis at Stanegate Restorations in Haltwhistle, Northumbria. F37 was saved from scrapping by enthusiast Peter Rampton in 1974 to become part of his Collection X, and was sold back to the Isle of Man in 2022, It is expected to return to the island in the near future.

Festival dates set

The 2026 version of the highly popular Manx Heritage Transport Festival, which involves all of the island's heritage lines, will take place from 28th July to 2nd August. Among the specific attractions next year will be celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway.

Mountaineer progress

Recent progress on the project to restore the Ffestinog Railway's Alco 2-6-2T 'Mountaineer' has seen the boiler transferred from Blaenau Ffestiniog to Boston Lodge so that remedial work can start in due course. The chassis is also now at Boston Lodge for repairs and modifications to begin.

Romney visitors

Sister locos 'Sian' and 'Katie', today based at Kirklees, and 'Wroxham Broad' from the Bure Valley Railway were set to join in the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's traditional Autumn Gala on 18th-19th October, this year named as a Railway 200 event. Wroxham Broad has just returned from overhaul.

More Mona disappears

More of the former Bord na Mona 3ft gauge network in Ireland is steadily disappearing following the end of peat extraction. The branch to Clonbullogue Ash Repository became the latest to go, being lifted over the summer.

Iain in the hot seat

NGW sends congratulations to Iain McCall, known to many readers as the man behind transport publisher Mainline & Maritime, who has been appointed editor of the long-established and much-respected Ffestiniog Railway Society magazine.

Radio plug sparks confusion over watercress loco status

A BBC radio programme appears to have sparked some controversy over the status of a locomotive currently working at a watercress farm in Dorset.

An edition of *Secret Dorset* broadcast in September on BBC Radio Solent highlighted the line at Dodding's Farm, in Bere Regis, Dorset. Transport writer David Henshaw had contacted the programme to tell them about the railway and its petrol locomotive, called 'The Watercress Queen.' Mr Henshaw stated that he had last visited the farm in 2023 and the railway was then operational, adding that it has just reached its hundredth birthday.

BBC reporter Patrick Hughes visited the farm and concluded the loco had been out of action for a while, saying; "the inside was full of cobwebs,". He interviewed farm manager Kelvin Dutton who stated "It's not in its best state at the moment."

Mr Dutton, who has worked at the farm for two years, was quoted as saying the days of the railway were probably over and there had been enquiries from enthusiasts wanting to buy the loco. On the programme Mr Henshaw expressed fears that the locomotive might go for scrap, urging that it be saved.

However ***NGW*** has since received a letter, which we have printed on page 48, stating that the loco, built locally in 1948, is neither for sale or a former First World War trench loco as stated on the BBC website. "The loco is a four-wheel petrol hydraulic, with a Honda engine... considered an integral part of the railway," the letter stated, adding that it is used regularly during the season to transfer cress from the beds to store sheds, serviced annually locally and stored safely in a barn during the winter.

The BBC story also suggested that the Dodding's Farm line might be the last working agricultural railway in the UK, and a unique line – the former may be true, but it was until recently not the only watercress line. In ***NGW***195 Steve Sedgwick described the hand-worked Nine Wells Farm line in Herefordshire, which was working in its centenary year of 2018 but on a recent visit appeared to be redundant.

Working or not? 'The Watercress Queen' and its line in Dorset. ***Photo: Anthony Heale-Barton***

Blythburgh group's running line plan rejected by council

Attempts to build a running line by the group that has established a heritage centre at the former Blythburgh station of the Southwold Railway in Suffolk have been rejected by local councillors.

The Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway Society applied to extend its existing trackwork, which runs through the platform at Blythburgh, halfway along the 3ft gauge line that closed in 1929.

The plan sought to lay a further 250 metres of line on the existing trackbed along a pathway known as the Church Path. The track would be tramway style to maintain access for both pedestrians and vehicles – on train operating days vehicle access would be suspended and a fence erected to maintain the footpath.

However after receiving 14 letters of objection East Suffolk council threw out the plans. It stated that Suffolk County Council was investigating whether Church Path constitutes a public right of way, and if it does the track would obstruct it.

Attempts to revive the Southwold Railway have faced consistent local opposition. The separate Southwold Railway Trust, which has established its Steamworks Centre in Southwold, failed in 2007 to gain permission for a line along the trackbed from the coastal town.

More stock cover at the Gunpowder line

Volunteers at the Gunpowder Railway at Waltham Abbey in Essex are making significant progress towards housing more of the 2ft 6in gauge line's heritage stock under cover, after completing the construction of a steel building frame.

Components for the frame were discovered in undergrowth around the edge of the railway yard, and despite likely dating back to the Second World War era, were found to be in near perfect condition. "It required only cleaning and red oxide treatment before being reassembled rather in the manner of a large Meccano set – but without instructions!" the line's Nick Turner told ***NGW***.

When complete the shed will measure 11 metres long by four metres wide.

■ A feature on the Gunpowder Railway starts on page 28.

■ **"Clear as far as I can see..." While based at the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway (see page 7), Beamish museum's Stephen Lewis replica 'Samson' joined in the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway's Gala on 13th-14th September, seen here crossing the Cambrian main line at Cae Pawb.** ***Photo: Michael Chapman***

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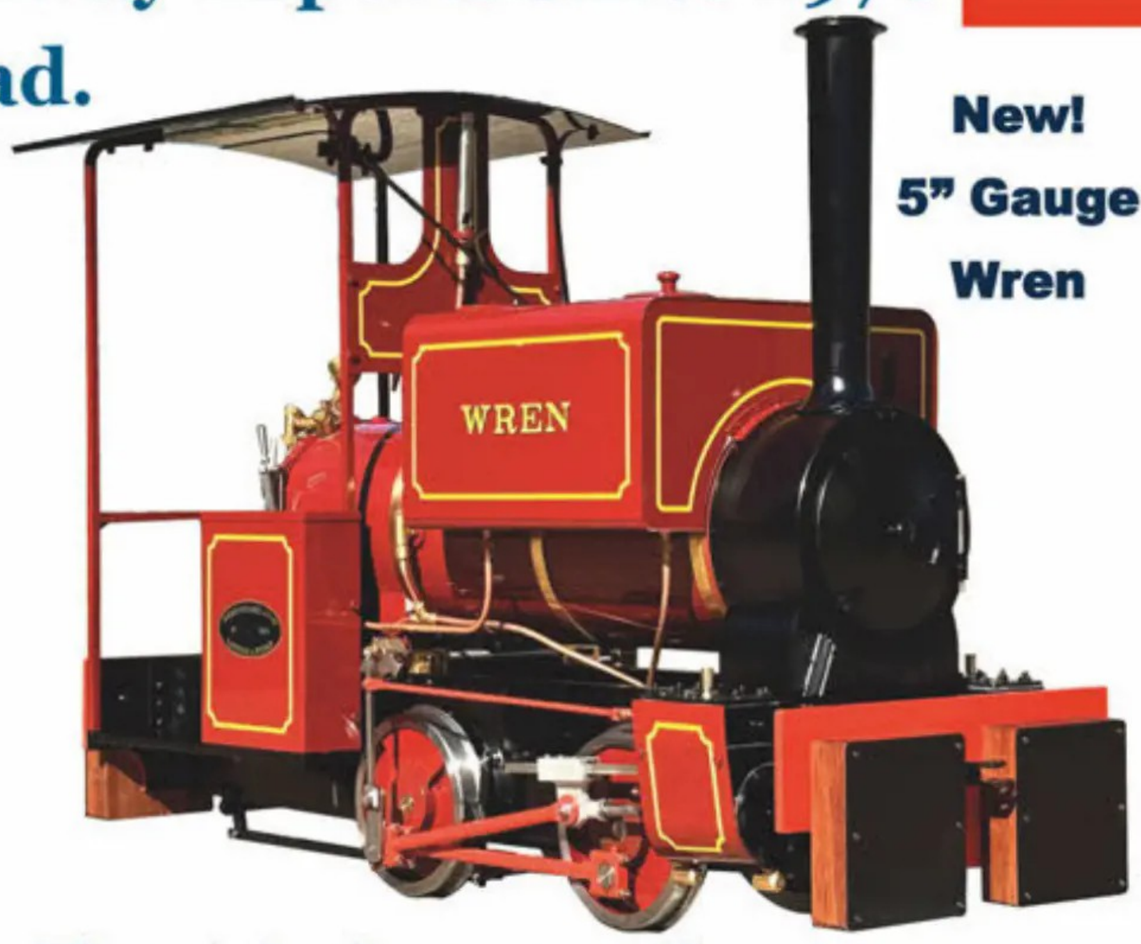

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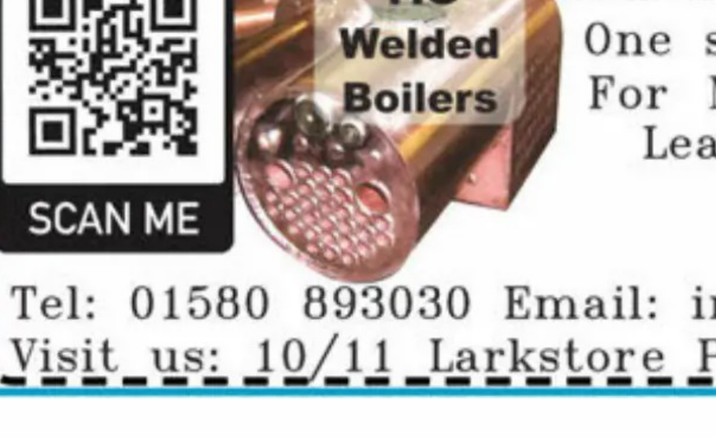

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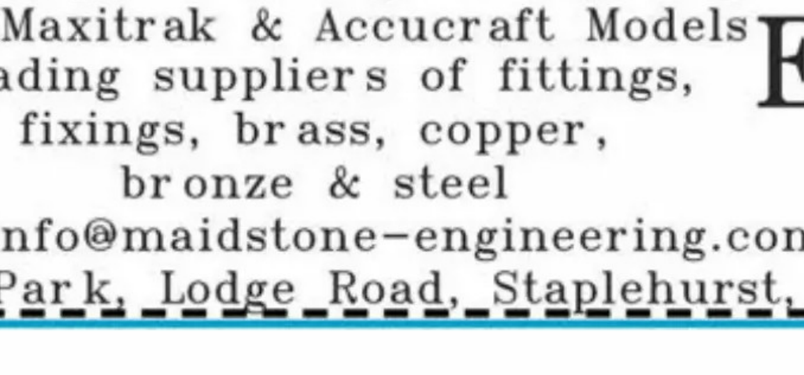

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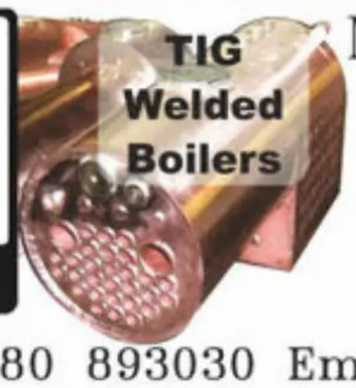

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New boiler needed for Statfold's Black Hawthorn

Dismantling has been completed of the most recent arrival at the Derbyshire 'Workshop X' restoration facility, which has been commissioned by the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust to restore Black Hawthorn 0-4-0ST no 748.

Completed in 1883 for a copper mine in southern Spain and named 'Portugueza', the 640mm gauge loco was one of only two narrow gauge steam engines built by the Gateshead company. The other was the 3ft gauge 'Kettering Furnaces No.3', displayed for many years at the Penrhyn Castle Industrial Museum but now being returned to working order at Northern Heritage Engineering in Darlington for the Waterford Suir Valley Railway in Ireland.

No 748 underwent many changes during its working life included being renamed 'Escucha' and having side tanks added either side of its saddle tank. Analysis by the Workshop X team has concluded, however, that a reported regauging to 600mm never took place, the loco runninging satisfactorily on narrower gauge track due to extreme wheel wear. It will be regauged as part of the restoration.

The loco returned to the UK in 1984 following closure of its final workplace at Utrillas in Spain, purchased by enthusiast Eric Maxwell who intended to restore it and moved it to the Tanfield Railway in Gateshead, close to where it was built.

Following Eric's death, the loco passed into the care of the Hawthorn Locomotive & Carriage Trust which placed it on long-term loan at Statfold.

Restoration will present the Workshop X team with major challenges, the loco described as "in a partially dismantled state, in very poor condition, with many parts considerably altered over the years. Unlike most of the restoration and new build work carried out here at the workshop there are no original drawings surviving, not even a photograph of what it looked like when new".

In addition to the new boiler, work required will include welding major cracks in the frames, refurbishing the axleboxes, cylinder and motion and building a new cab and saddle tank from scratch. The funding for the boiler is currently being determined with all the other work being funded by Statfold.

Above: Black Hawthorn 748 on display at Statfold in 2024, showing that it may be a small locomotive but it needs a large amount of work to return to steam.

Photo: Andrew Charman

■ **On display for visitors to the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway's end-of-season Gala on 26th-27th September was the complete former Ministry of Defence train recently purchased by the line, consisting of Clayton battery electric loco B0483 of 1976 and three 'clam-shell' wagons. The railway intends to use the acquisitions for both shunting purposes and on permanent way trains.**

Photo: Phil Barnes

Corris plans to bridge culvert on extension south

The Corris Railway has decided to bridge a culvert that will need to be traversed on the route of the mid-Wales line's southern extension.

Originally it was considered that the Pont y Goedwig culvert could be crossed on a retaining wall but the Highways Authority, which owns the structure alongside the A487 trunk road, expressed concern over the extra weight pressure on the existing culvert.

The railway has shared a video showing that it now plans to cross over the culvert at height on a girder bridge – work is underway to design the bridge and undertake the detailed preparation work that will be needed to install the structure with minimal disruption and without damaging the surrounding environment.

Readers can view the video at the following link; bit.ly/4opuZEj

CLR makes progress on BnM Hunslet

The Cavan and Leitrim Railway Museum enjoyed a successful final steaming day of the 2025 season on 28th September, the museum's Dromod Centre seeing plenty of visitors keen to take a ride behind resident former Stanton Ironworks Avonside 0-6-0T 'Nancy' (1547/1908).

With the site now closed for the winter, in addition to maintenance work the overhaul of Hunslet Hydraulic loco LM384 will continue – the loco, that once operated on hire to the Tralee and Blennerville railway, was obtained from the Bord na Mona peat operation following its closure.

■ The museum has clarified information provided for ***NGW***'s story last month on the rescue of the remains of two railcar saloons built in the 1950s for the West Clare sections of the 3ft gauge CIE network and recently stored at the West Clare operation, closed since 2022. The saloons were rescued by the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Museum, not the Tralee and Dingle Railway as stated.

Below: Overhaul of the former Bord na Mona Hunslet continues. ***Photo: CLRM***

Remote line recalled in path

A five-mile section of the former Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway has been opened to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders under the title of the Muckish Railway Walk, recalling a wild and remote section of the Northern Irish 3ft gauge line in the shadow of Muckish Mountain (*reports* ***Hugh Dougherty***).

The walk, which includes refurbished cuttings, culverts, embankments and the L&BER's characteristic round stone gateposts, re-opens a part of the county inaccessible since the closure of the line in 1947, as no public roads penetrate the area.

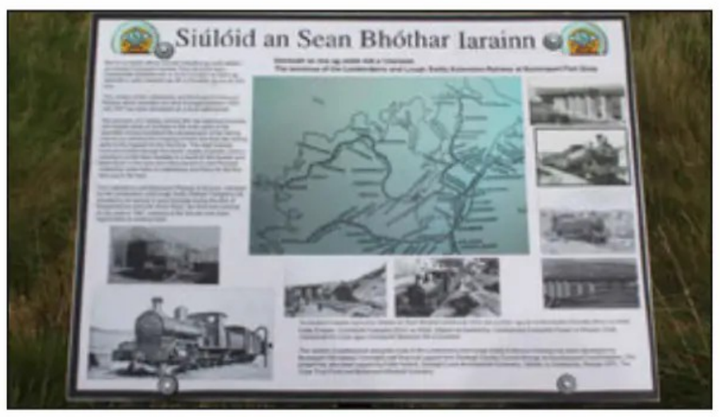
A two-mile length of the trackbed has been surfaced – the remaining three miles to Falcarragh Station is passable, but still to be brought up to full standards. Local groups and Donegal County Council plan to reinstate the whole 50-mile route from Letterkenny to Burtonport as a greenway.

On the Muckish Railway Walk, safety fences have been installed along raised embankments. Walkers and cyclists also tackle the steep 1-in-50 gradients taking the line to its summit at Lough Agher. Information boards show pictures of the line in action, featuring the Lough Swilly's massive 4-8-0 tender and 4-8-4 tank locos.

Closed between Burtonport and Gweedore in 1940, the remaining section between Gweedore and Letterkenny was revived during World War II as the replacement buses were short of fuel. Final closure came in 1947, with the track lifted in 1949, and the trackbed lying derelict until its current restoration.

Donegal County Council Heritage Officer, Dr Joe Gallagher said the new walk celebrates the heritage of the railway. "Visitors will get an impression of just how remote this railway was amidst the grandeur of Donegal mountain scenery and it's easy to imagine the trains, dwarfed by Muckish Mountain itself, battling their way up the gradients to and from Burtonport."

Photos: Hugh Dougherty



■ **In the second example of a UK heritage line adopting more traditional horsepower in recent weeks (see page 8), the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway operated its first horse-drawn service on 20th-21st September as part of the line's successful World War One Weekend.**

'Trixie', from the private Silverleaf Poplar Light Railway, close to the LCLR at Old Leake, hauled a class P ration wagon, recreating the manner in which supplies were moved around the trenches of the battlefields. Other attractions included demonstrations by a farrier and members of the living history group Hull Rifles in correct period uniforms travelling in the railway's stock, most of which dates back to the First World War. ***Photo: Dave Enefer/LCLR***

■ **The Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway's end-of-season Gala on 26th-27th September featured some unusual passenger workings by the line's internal-combustion fleet alongside the usual steam offerings. Hudson-Hunslet 4wDM 'Victor' (4182/1953) is seen here on the line's signature concrete viaduct, with the first two carriages vehicles built for the Lodge Hill & Upnor naval line, once located close to the Sittingbourne operation.** ***Photo: Phil Barnes***

■ **The visiting motive power at the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Autumn Gala on 27th-28th September combined to operate this unusual double-headed goods train with some additional banking. Vertical-boilered De Winton 'Chaloner' and Kerr, Stuart Wren 'Peter Pan', both normally based at the Leighton Buzzard Railway, were assisted by the diminutive 0-4-2T 'Faith', built some years ago by L&B engineer John Uphill.** ***Photo: Joshua Brinsford***

Send WORLD NEWS stories to Andrew Charman by email, editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk, or by post to 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, SY21 0BD. Telephone: 01938 810592

Floods shut Durango after tropical storm

USA

The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in Colorado was forced to suspend operations for two days on 11th October due to damage caused by a tropical rain storm.

Heavy rain that swept through southwest Colorado over the weekend caused significant flooding in the San Juan Mountains through which the 45-mile long 3ft gauge line runs.

The first Saturday train from Durango reached Silverton safely, but railroad manager Jeff Johnson told local media that it was deemed safer to return passengers to Durango by bus, and two later trains had to be turned round early as the weather deteriorated. A diesel service was dispatched with local emergency services to rescue stranded hikers – "then we found ourselves unable to operate for two days, in any capacity," Johnson said.

On Saturday evening railroad staff discovered washed-out track north of Needleton, 13 miles from Silverton – local media reported that the river had risen some three feet in a single day, then another foot in following days, while its flow rate, normally between 300 and 500 cubic feet per second, peaked at 5840 cfs on Tuesday.

More track damage was discovered by D&SNGR permanent way teams on the Monday north of Rockwood, 18 miles from Durango, and further damage around Needleton on Tuesday.

Train services were able to resume over half of the line on that day as repairs began on the affected sections – D&SNGR officials were expecting the full line to be reopened within a week.

Photo: D&SNGR

■ **The German reunification holiday on 3rd October proved to be the last day of operation in 2025 for the 600mm gauge Britzer Parkbahn in Berlin, GERMANY, *reports Dominic Emery*. A driver on the line said that the early end to the season was due to a lack of operating staff, who have to travel to Berlin from Saxony or Thurigia.**

Next year the line is set to be taken over by a new operating company – ZossenRail, based closer to the German capital, will be renting the extant diesel locomotives and rolling stock.

Crashed car cuts charter

The Sibiu to Agnita Railway in **ROMANIA** had to cancel one of its recently arranged regular charter train services last month, when the train rounded a bend to find a crashed car abandoned on the track ahead.

According to David Rowbotham of the line's British-based support group SAR UK, the local police were aware of the incident, but assumed the railway was closed and so had not notified anyone.

Future development on the railway is focusing on extending the currently 7km long operating section of the line between Hosman and Cornățel further towards Sibiu, which will involve reinstating a run-round loop at the next station on the route at Cașolt.

SARUK members will work on this project and also the planned building of a new depot and maintenance shed at Cornățel. Both will make use of trackwork that was purchased at scrap value from the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in Wales, the rail no longer fit for purpose on the demanding route of the Welsh line but suitable for the lesser demands of the SAR.

SAR UK recently completed a successful tracklaying week on the line – a full report will be in the next issue of *NGW*.

Above: The sight that greeted the charter train crew and forced its cancellation.

Photo: Horia Dinu, via SAR UK

Harz under threat of cutbacks?

As *NGW* went to press news surfaced from **GERMANY** of a 'Beeching-style' report presented on the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen, suggesting that the metre-gauge system should be reduced to only the popular tourist route to the top of the Brocken mountain and the line between Nordhausen and Ilfield.

The report was rejected but measures set to happen include the closing of the Selketalbahn line for some five years due to construction of a dam, which enthusiasts fear could mean the end of the line or at least steam services on it.

We hope to have more detail on these proposals in our next issue.

Krauss Pacifics celebrate centenary

The German Transport Exhibition held in Munich in June 1925 saw the use of three brand-new 15-inch gauge 4-6-2 Pacific locomotives built in the city by Krauss (*reports* ***Christian Jummrich***) and 100 years on Leipzig and Dresden hosted centenary celebrations for the 'Liliputloks'.

Most of the 15 locos eventually built in this series, as well as three almost identical Krupp locos, have been preserved. Some are still in operation today on various park railways in Europe, the three oldest running in the Grosser Garten in Dresden and on the railway at Auensee in Leipzig.

The Leipzig-based second loco built, works no 8352, set off by road to Dresden on 3rd September where over the weekend of 6th-7th September it featured in a varied programme on the 5.6km long park railway in the Grosser Garten, running with the two other original Liliputs, 'Lisa' (8351) and 'Moritz' (8353).

Highlights included a loco parade and parallel runs between the Straßburger Platz and Zoo stations, all three locos working trains and visitors also allowed behind-the-scenes tours of the operating facilities.

The Leipzig Lilliput also worked regular timetabled services on the Dresden line on 13th-14th September, before returning to Leipzig, accompanied by Lisa. The pioneer loco was chosen as Moritz had previously visited Leipzig in 2011 and 2016. Two passenger cars from Dresden were also taken to reinforce the Leipzig vehicle fleet.

After testing of the Dresden locomotive on the 1.9km Leipzig circuit around a lake in the northwest of the city, the two engines operated an extensive service over the 20th-21st and 27th-28th September, sometimes working together.

The class of Krauss Liliputs include four in the UK – 8457, built in 1929 now runs on the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway as 'Whillan Beck', while 1662 and 1663 are today at Bressingham Museum as 'Rosenkavalier' and 'Männertrau', and 1664 runs on the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway as 'Black Prince' – all three locos built in 1937.

Above The three pioneer Krauss locos line up in Dresden, residents 'Lisa' (left) and 'Moritz framing their visitor from Leipzig.

Below: All three locos worked together over the Dresden celebration weekend.

Photos: Christian Jummrich

10-strong loco cavalcade for line's 10th birthday

As briefly mentioned last month the Pairi Daïza Railway, a 600mm gauge line based in a zoological park in Western **BELGIUM**, celebrated its 10th anniversary on 13th-14th September with a 10-strong cavalcade of locomotives (*reports* ***Guy Tyteca***).

The line, which UK narrow gauge engineer Alan Keef Ltd was heavily involved in the building of, consists of a 2km loop running between animal enclosures in the 75-hectare park, passing among others kangaroos, gorillas, hippos, rhinos, giraffes and elephants.

For the 10th birthday event a 10-strong 'reunion' was organised with six visiting locos. Four came from France, the P'tit Train de la Haute Somme sending 1925-built Vulcan 0-8-0+T no 8, from the Chemin de Fer de la Vallée de l'Ouche the 1910 Couillet 0-6-0T 'Burgonde', from Pithiviers Le Meuse 2-6-0T 'Les Fontenelles' of 1938, and from the Chemin de Fer à Vapeur de la Scarpe 1911-built Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT 'Pistache'.

They were joined by Graham Morris's well-travelled Kerr, Stuart Wren 0-4-0ST 'Peter Pan' from the UK, and from Czechia a 2014-built replica of an Orenstein & Koppel 0-6-0T.

The sextet made for an impressive cavalcade alongside the four residents, two 0-6-0Ts built by LAS in Poland in 1954 and '57 and a pair of Henschels both built in 1917, an 0-6-0T and an 0-8-0T Brigadelok. Also on show was a fifth loco that will join the Pairi Daïza – under restoration in Czechia, the 1900-built Couillet 0-6-0T was formerly part of Peter Rampton's 'Collection X' in the UK.

All ten steam locos followed each other on the 2km loop layout through the park and then three passenger trains were operated, each double-headed by a resident and a visiting loco.

Above: The line-up of locos impressed visiting enthusiasts.

CFVO Couillet 0-6-0T 'Burgonde' to the fore amongst the varied fleet of home and guest locos.

Photos: Guy Tyteca

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Sardinian Tourist trains hanging on

Correspondent ***Mick Bass*** recently rode the 'Green Train' tourist train service between Luras and Tempio on the Mediterranean island of **SARDINIA**.

The route is one of those operated under the title of 'Trenino Verde', used since 1984 to describe former secondary routes on Sardinia now used for tourist services – the name, meaning little green train, is linked to the rich vegetation which can be viewed from the trains.

Currently 251 miles of the Sardinian network are used for the Trenio Verde services with a range of trains available to visitors, though Mick described the station at Luras as "looking completely abandoned when you first arrive".

He added however, that the rail journey was highly enjoyable through vineyards and flagged level crossings; "The station at Tempio doubles as a bus terminal and there is a small museum with a small tank engine and fully equipped workshop still with its Victorian overhead belt driven machinery".

Mick concluded, however, that the current trains represent "a sad remnant of what must have been a fascinating and scenic system across the country".

Above: The 'little green train' waits to depart from a less than busy Tempio.

Above right: The small museum at Tempio houses this tank loco.

Right: Railcars stored at Tempio have been struck by vandals.
Photos by Mick Bass, September 2025

■ **Following the story in *NGW*197 detailing the celebrations planned for October in GERMANY by the 'Molli', celebrating the 30th anniversary since privatisation of the 900mm gauge line that runs between Bad Doberan, Heiligendamm and Kühlungsborn on the Baltic Sea coast in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, *Tony Nicholson* sent in this photo. Taken on 13th June, it clearly demonstrates the unique appeal of the tram rights in Bad Doberan that the line has retained since its opening in 1896. As can be seen these allow the large narrow gauge trains to make their way down the streets – Tony tells us that the cafe at left proved a great place to have lunch between trains!**

BRIEF LINES

Timbertown goes up for sale

The owner of the Timbertown theme park in New South Wales, **AUSTRALIA** has announced plans to retire and put the attraction up for sale. The park, depicting a Colonial-era sawmiller's village, includes a 2km long 1ft 11½in gauge railway, worked by former South Johnstone Mill Fowler 0-4-2T 'Ruby' (17881/1928).

MTVS event for pioneer loco

Members of the Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways (MTVS) at Crèvecœur-le-Grand, **FRANCE** made their own contribution to 'Railway 200' at the end of September with a celebratory event which featured a replica of pioneer standard gauge locomotive 'Marc Seguin' running on temporary track. The original loco of 1829 was the first steam engine to employ a multi-tube boiler. ***Photo: MTVS***

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First Look at the Narrow Gauge

David Joy **sets the scene for James Waite's portrayal of the Eastwell ironstone railway and its locally preserved 'Lord Granby'.**

As features editor of ***NGW***, I always look forward to receiving the *Waite's World* text for each issue. Yet this time it induced a sense that was not quite decrepitude, but definitely one of being less young.

It was the reference to an enjoyable open day this August at the Eastwell Heritage Centre in Leicestershire – home to Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST 'Lord Granby' (633/1902). It proved just too tempting to do some mental arithmetic, leading to the unavoidable conclusion that 66 years had elapsed since I last saw this locomotive at the nearby 3ft gauge Eastwell ironstone system. It was shut in a shed, awaiting its fate along with five other engines on a line clearly on its last legs.

Quite what took me to Eastwell on 21st September 1959 was mentioned in passing in ***NGW***188, when I wrote a postscript to Clive Hawley's article on the neighbouring Waltham Quarry Railway. While the two lines were seen on the same day, this metre gauge system definitely took second place. It was both shorter and completely closed. Above all, there was one personal reason why it could not compete with Eastwell – the first narrow gauge railway I ever visited, if only by a few hours!

In an age of no instant communication there was one way a schoolboy living in York could discover if it was still operating. I had a bike, which could be put on any train, and a map showed that Eastwell was only ten miles from Grantham station. So off I set, not having the remotest idea of what I would find.

It was a demanding uphill pedal before finally reaching the centre of Eastwell ironstone operations. There was no steam but it could have been much worse. The railway was in a state of suspended animation with nothing to disturb the rural calm and magnificent views across the Vale of Belvoir. Not a soul was in sight. The 'Marie Celeste' feeling was heightened by tubs loaded with ironstone clipped to the cable-worked incline as if about to start the long descent to the tipping stage far below.

"The railway was in a state of suspended animation with nothing to disturb the rural calm..."

Six from five

Yet six different locomotives by five different builders could be seen. Outside a repair shop was out-of-use 'Underbank', a Peckett 0-4-0ST of 1900, and 'Belvoir', a massive Hunslet 0-6-0ST built in 1936. Peering through the windows showed that languishing inside was not only Lord Granby but also 'Mountaineer', a Bagnall 0-6-0ST of 1923. Its sister engine 'Pioneer', built in 1913, was over in the running shed, as was Avonside 0-6-0T 'Nancy' dating from 1908, but neither was in steam.

It transpired that the railway had briefly struggled into action a week earlier and one final day of operation was likely before it was superseded by road haulage. The cable-worked incline would be no more and the fate of the locomotives was uncertain.

After briefly visiting the Waltham line and then free-wheeling on the bike most of the way back down to Grantham, I wondered if any might possibly be preserved. What has happened since, with particular reference to 'Lord Granby', is taken up by James in the following pages.

Above: The small size of the ironstone tubs at Eastwell is clearly apparent in this 1948 photo by *J.M. Jarvis* of Bagnall 0-6-0ST 'Mountaineer' bringing in a loaded train.

Left: Looking down the incline to where the line ends at a loading dock far below.

Photo: David Joy.

Eastwell and 'Lord Granby'

James Waite **relates his fascination with the ironstone line and a recent visit to an open day at its museum.**

It is sometimes said that the ironstone quarries in the Midlands came and went without becoming etched into the collective memories of the communities nearby, in contrast for instance to many coal mining communities which continue to be defined by the industry long after the mines closed down.

It's true that many villages in places such as South Wales were built solely to house the colliery workers, whereas in the Midlands ironstone fields they were there long before quarrying began, and the industry only ever employed a relatively small proportion of their residents.

One such old-established village is Eastwell in Leicestershire, perched at the top of the marlstone escarpment 80 metres above the Vale of Belvoir, close to the county's borders with Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland. For more than 80 years until the 1960s it was at the heart of an ironstone quarrying district, but agriculture and cheese-making have also been dominant activities.

Above: Eastwell Ironstone in a state of suspended animation – 21st September 1959. Peckett 0-4–0ST 'Underbank' reposes outside the repair shop in front of Hunslet 0-6-0ST 'Belvoir'.

Below: The repair shop is on the left of the 'sausage' water tank and the running shed on the right.

Photos taken in September 1959 by David Joy. All other photos by James Waite

The huge dairy factories at Long Clawson and Cropwell Bishop, only a few miles away, supply much of the Stilton cheese on sale in supermarkets throughout the UK, and there are many other equally delicious products which can only be found locally. However, Eastwell has not forgotten its quarrying past, thanks to the Eastwell History Group – widely supported locally it is dedicated to preserving its heritage, notably the remains from its ironstone industry.

More ore

The Eastwell quarries, and the neighbouring operation at Waltham, were controlled by the company which ran the Staveley ironworks, between Chesterfield and Killamarsh in north Derbyshire. In the 1870s and 1880s it was actively looking out for new sources of ore to feed its expanding business, often operating in partnership with other concerns.

Staveley allowed the quarries a large measure of independence which seemingly extended to the choice of gauge for the railways essential for transporting the stone on the first part of its journey to be smelted. Waltham, with its metre gauge line and its two locos that had spent earlier lives in France, was described in detail in Clive Hawley's excellent article in *NGW*188.

Eastwell's 3ft system was the subject of another superb feature in *NGW*97 by Graham Doyle, at a time when 'Lord Granby', its first conventional loco after the vertical-cylindered ones built by Staveley for both Eastwell and Waltham, had just been rescued by the history group. By then the 1902-built Hudswell Clarke had been deteriorating for many years in open-air storage at Leeds, and the group was about to begin a cosmetic restoration. Graham was a key member of the small restoration team.

I'd been fascinated by the Midlands ironstone railways ever since being taken to see one of the lines as a small child in 1957 by a kindly uncle who lived in Northampton; we never saw any »

trains, and I don't know for sure which line it was, but it was my first introduction to a working narrow gauge railway. Two years later David Joy was better informed than me with his first narrow gauge encounter when he pedalled up the long hill after Grantham station to visit Eastwell and Waltham.

Even though the Waltham system had already closed and no trains were running at Eastwell that day, David brought back several excellent photos, some in colour, which accompany this feature. They show the engine shed and workshops complex, and the well-known cable incline just a short distance away which was used to lower the primitive steel wagons down the escarpment to Stathern Ironstone Sidings on the former GNR/LNWR joint line between Bottesford Junction and Melton Mowbray. There the stone would be loaded into BR wagons for onward transit to Staveley.

New museum

Early in 2023 I asked the group about progress with 'Lord Granby'. Back came a prompt reply from Graham, reporting that they had generously been given the use of a fully equipped engineering shop at Stathern but soon needed to move out. The restoration of Lord Granby was almost complete and the loco would soon take up residence at a new museum at Eastwell. He kindly invited me to come and inspect progress. Six weeks later the museum building was ready, and I went to watch the venerable loco make its journey over the Grantham Canal and up the escarpment to its new home (***NGW***175).

The museum is at Crossroads Farm, the home of Alan and Jane Hewson on the edge of the village and just a stone's throw from the old quarry line. Alan is a trustee of the history group. His grandfather began to farm there back in 1937, mostly on land which was restored for agriculture after the ironstone had been quarried. For many years it was a dairy farm, but the diminishing yield from milk production led the Hewsons to set up the Belvoir Ridge Creamery to produce artisan cheese.

Colwick, in Nottingham's suburbs, is perhaps best known by many enthusiasts for its Great Northern Railway engine shed, which remained a steam bastion as late as December 1966. However for many in the city the name still conjures up happy memories of the distinctive Colwick soft cheese.

Commercial production of this local delight ceased in 1993 – reputedly because the high cost of manufacture to serve just a small market was unviable. Jane comes from Nottingham, and the Hewsons delighted many of the city's residents when they began to make it again in 2013. Sadly the cheese has again become just a memory now that they have retired. The least attractive buildings at the farm have been replaced by housing – and the railway museum. In place of their old cheese shop and café premises different operators now run a delicatessen.

Next to the museum building is the surviving part of a water tank – rescued by the Hewsons, it now forms an unusual flower bed. It may have been part of a pair of tanks known as 'the Pulsometer' after the maker of the pump that supplied it. The system used condensing steam to create a vacuum to lift water into one of the tanks, the alternating process using steam to force water out of one tank while creating another vacuum in the other to draw up more water. This pulsating action gave the system its name. It's now thought more likely, however to have come from a replacement tank close to Crossroads Farm. Both were used in preference to the tank at the engine shed since the water there was dirty, and fit only for washing out the locos' boilers.

Above: The head of the incline in 1959 with loaded tubs on the left of two rows of empties. They are coated with the distinct ochre of ironstone dust.

Below: 'Lord Granby' in the engineering shop at Stathern on 19th March 2023.

Facing page, far right: Lord Granby basks in the sunshine outside the museum. On the left the flowers stand in the remains of the old water tank, 10th August 2025.

Return visit

I made a third visit for one of the museum's occasional open days in August 2025. Lord Granby had been drawn out to bask in the sunshine, and looked very happy at its new home. It has been joined by the only survivor of the hundreds of Eastwell wagons, built to an unusual design used on several Staveley railways in the district.

Adorning a wall was a nameboard from the signalbox at the exchange sidings on the old joint line, and nameplates from four Eastwell and Waltham locos were arranged on the loco's running plate. They were rescued by Mr Eli Coy, the manager of the two quarries, when scrapping began in 1960.

Other plates were presented to the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at the Talyllyn Railway, where those on display include 'The Scot', an identical Hudswell Clarke to Lord Granby (776/1906). It was scrapped in 1957 but its wheelsets, and

probably other parts, were fitted to Lord Granby after the loco entered the workshop in 1958 for a final overhaul that was never completed.

The nameplates that went to the Talyllyn were accompanied by 'Cambrai', one of Waltham's French 0-6-0Ts. After spending many years displayed outside the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum the loco is now on loan to the Irchester ironstone railway museum. Its typically French headlamp, quite unlike anything on the UK's narrow gauge, stayed behind in Tywyn and is still on display. The Talyllyn also benefitted from 200 tons of Eastwell rail.

The Eastwell quarry line was unusual in being partially signaled at the junction with a branch close to the workshops, which suffered from restricted visibility because of cuttings and a sharp bend. These were no ordinary signals but full somersault ones, reputedly designed with input from a GNR engineer, though the mechanisms were likely unique. The branch signal is on show at Tywyn.

More survivors

Beyond Crossroads Farm there are few relics left at Eastwell, though parts of the route are still marked by hedgerows. Elsewhere two other locos with Eastwell connections have survived. 'Nancy' arrived there in 1950, along with 'Belvoir' which makes a cameo appearance in one of David's photos. Nancy worked the last train ten years later, and now runs on the restored section of the Cavan & Leitrim Railway in Ireland, painted in an approximation of its old Eastwell paint scheme.

Peckett 0-6-0ST 'Scaldwell' spent most of its working life on the ironstone system after which it was named, but was at Eastwell on loan helping out between 1947 and 1950. Initially acquired for preservation by the Brockham Museum and displayed for many years at Amberley, it now shares a shed at the Southwold Railway Trust with the replica 2-4-0T 'Blyth', and is awaiting restoration.

Worthy though both locos are, Lord Granby has a special appeal now that it has returned to its old Leicestershire home. The Eastwell museum only holds occasional open days but it's well worth paying a visit when one takes place. NGW

Above: The open day at Crossroads Farm on 10th August 2025 included four nameplates, displayed on the running plate of Lord Granby. 'Dreadnought' was a Waltham Manning Wardle (1757/1910), which ran with 'Cambrai' until the line closed in 1958. The other three are from Eastwell locos.

Above right: The preserved Eastwell wagon at Crossroads Farm.

Below: The somersault signal from the Beech Grove branch at the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn, 22nd August 2025. The loco nameplates to the right include Eastwell's 'The Scot'.

Really Useful Engines

Andrew Charman **visits the Statfold Barn Railway to learn why enthusiasts should celebrate, rather than condemn, Thomas the Tank Engine.**

For your editor and many a reader of ***NGW***, a new season effectively begins with the first enthusiast day of the year at the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust. Anyone who has been to any of these events at the museum near Tamworth (and if you read this magazine and haven't, why on earth not?) will know that there is always plenty of action from multiple steam locos, and always something new to see.

So back in March off I went, and this time among those new things was the former Rustenberg platinum mine Bagnall 0-4-2T 'Isaac', reliveried in a very fetching shade of Caledonian blue. The loco was working its train of two Darjeeling carriages into an equally new and very wide platform at Oak Tree Halt, on the opposite side of the track to the existing platform and with a large wooden shed built upon it.

"Oh yes, we are going to display 'Handy Man' in there," Statfold's Henry Noon told me, referring to the former Burton Ironstone Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST recently cosmetically restored for Statfold by Workshop X in Derbyshire. "And it will be the reception area and platform for our Thomas weekends".

Now as a Trustee of a preserved railway, it immediately made sense to me that Statfold might run a weekend based around the children's favourite that is Thomas the Tank engine. What began as a series of stories created for his children by the Reverend Wilbert Awdry in the 1940s has since first being televised in 1984 become a massive global phenomenon – today Thomas is a hugely successful global brand, with more than 200 million books sold along with toys and other merchandise. Today owned by US toy giant Mattel, the franchise has grossed well over $9 billion.

Above: Bagnall 'Isaac' in its role as 'Thomas', heads back towards Oak Tree Halt with another load of happy young visitors. The bunting graphics on the loco were applied at the request of Thomas franchise owner Mattel, marking 80 years of the books.

Photo: Joey Evans/SNGMT

Below: The new platform and covered waiting area built at Oak Tree Halt.

Photo: Andrew Charman, 8th March 2025

I also immediately knew, however, that among likely more than half of my fellow enthusiasts that day, mentioning Statfold and Thomas the Tank engine in the same sentence would produce immediate reactions of horror and condemnation of another major heritage operation going down such a route.

So how, and more pertinently why, has Thomas come to Statfold? In early September I sat down to get the full story with Henry and the man who over the years has put together what is now without doubt the most important narrow gauge collection in the UK, Statfold founder Graham Lee.

Standards to meet

First comes the how, and an immediate demonstration of Statfold's overriding concern for the protection of its heritage assets. Thomas franchise owner Mattel

closely guards its product and any organisation wanting to stage a Thomas weekend has to meet strict criteria, not least that the engines look the part – simply hanging a crude painted face on a loco, such as was done for the early Thomas weekends in the 1990s, is no longer even close to acceptable.

As a result many standard gauge lines have hired in one of a couple of 0-6-0 tank locos that have been converted to resemble Thomas over the years, but being a 2ft gauge operation Statfold did not have that option, and in any case it planned to offer much more of an experience for visitors than simply a ride behind a blue engine.

With Isaac taking on the title role, Peckett 0-6-0ST 'Harrogate' and Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 'Fiji' were also selected for the character treatment, the green saddle tank Harrogate assuming the guise of the cheeky tank loco 'Percy' and with its red livery and tender, Fiji adopting the identity of 'James the red engine'.

Visual not physical

Henry explained that the aim was to get the locos looking as much like their characters as possible, "without doing anything radical, chopping them around". The plastic three-dimensional faces are made on site by a specialist, and the overall effect achieved by the use of false splashers, buffers and buckets, together with livery and lining which make use of top quality magnetic graphics.

"The lining makes a massive difference, being magnetic as are the numbers, they don't damage the paintwork," Henry said, pointing out extra bunting graphics applied to the tanks of Isaac, marking the 80th anniversary of the Thomas books in 2025. "That was Mattel's choice – everything we do has to be approved by Mattel but they've really liked what we have done."

According to Henry the changes to Isaac have caused the most comment among enthusiasts; "But the loco was not in its original colour when it arrived here anyway, and I'd say we've had as many compliments as we have complaints over the livery. This is the one exception in the collection – we normally restore locos to the condition that they came out of the factory and the condition is the same with this one, the only difference the paint job."

Having three character locos enables Statfold to offer a Thomas experience traditional railways cannot match, as Graham detailed; "We've had to develop our Thomas – in the UK it's built around standard gauge engines so we are quite unique. We've given Mattel a bigger Thomas experience here as when we put a show on we can have three or four characters outside, not one. Visitors can ride behind Thomas, then Percy... at the next one we're introducing Trevor the traction engine."

"The family events we run here pay the bills, and fundamentally we are doing it to secure Graham's world-class collection of locomotives..."

The new platform at Oak Tree Halt gathers visitors for their ride up and around the return loop behind Thomas, while on the opposite platform one of the other two locos takes trains the other way up to Statfold Junction, while the 15-inch gauge Mease Valley Light Railway also plays a role in the day. "What we can do here that most railways can't is have a lot going on in a relatively small space because we've got three lines we can use," Henry said.

Plenty of time is built into the operation for visitors to take photos and careful planning ensures that they can often capture at least two of the character engines in one picture; "Mattel loves that," commented Graham's son, also named Graham, adding that the franchise owner had taken several steps to ensure that Statfold could put on a suitable event. "Mattel looks at everything – toilets, food facilities. They sent some people under cover to one of our open days, and then felt confident that we could do what we said we would. We have very efficient ways of handling quite big numbers of people, which they understood".

Successfully organising Thomas events in today's market has clearly required a great deal of effort and investment on the part of Statfold, so what have been the benefits for this heritage centre?

Wider effect

Clearly there is a revenue benefit, not just ticket sales but particularly upsell – refreshments and merchandise. "We make a margin, but we also do a huge amount of upsell because we give the people who come here more than a four-hour experience and during that four hours they will eat and drink,"Graham senior said. "It's a combination of exposure, margin and probably the biggest aspect being upsell – we come close to selling out in the shops at our events."

Statfold gains major customer awareness from a Thomas event, some visitors travelling from quite »

Above right: As well as providing shelter for visitors to the Thomas weekends and other events, the new shed also plays a heritage role, housing the cosmetically restored Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0 loco 'Handy Man'. ***Photo: Joey Evans***

Right: Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 'Fiji' plays the role of 'James the red engine' with added magnetic graphics, false splashers, buffers and a large 'brass' dome – all the additions are temporary and can be removed in short order leaving no effect on the loco. ***Photo: Rhianne Newton/SNGMT***

long distances. Events produce a major social media reach and for Henry the marketing value is all-important. "The financial result is the be-all and end-all but for me the biggest thing is the exposure to people who wouldn't already have known us. It's a win-win – we put on a show that people love and in the process we will get more people to come and see Statfold outside of that.

"We are fulfilling a need and in the process earning a bit of money out of it – I don't think anyone would put a Thomas event on for fun because it would cost too much to make it work properly."

Henry has also noticed another less-obvious benefit from the events, also seen by the Tayllyn Railway at its own highly successful 'Awdry Experience' weekends; "it's interesting, at the first event we did we had a fair number of neuro-divergent adults there, who perhaps wouldn't feel safe at some of the events at traditional railways – at such events they feel uncomfortable because they are different."

While all the above can be seen as thoroughly viable reasons for Statfold staging Thomas events, the main reason is the one that all ***NGW*** readers should applaud – providing the means to maintain and enhance the Statfold collection, which until the formation of the Trust in 2017 belonged to Graham and had been gathered by him over many years.

"The family events we run here pay the bills, and fundamentally we are doing it to secure Graham's world-class collection of locomotives – everything else is built on that," Henry said.

Future proofing

"Everything is a means to an end," Graham added. "I need to leave a sustainable legacy beyond my lifetime to keep this collection going. And to do that you need an engine at the back of it that will produce money.

"Without the (formation of the) Trust and the activities, my family would have had to sell three parts of the collection to pay the taxes and it would have been broken up. Ultimately I had to give it all away to a Trust, but I am happy because it will give people here, young people, unimaginable joy for years to come. I see children come here every week, thrilled to bits with the events that we put on."

Statfold has now established its Thomas programme at four events a year, including a Christmas-themed programme which is a new direction for Mattel and has apparently delighted the franchise owner. Next year the number of weekends will stay at four to ensure the appeal of each is not diluted.

Meanwhile neither Henry or Graham has much time for those who argue heritage organisations shouldn't be staging such events. They point to a factor many heritage railways are now discovering, that in today's market a steam train ride is not enough for visitors while at the same time costs are multiplying at a frightening rate. Organisations need more than one product to survive.

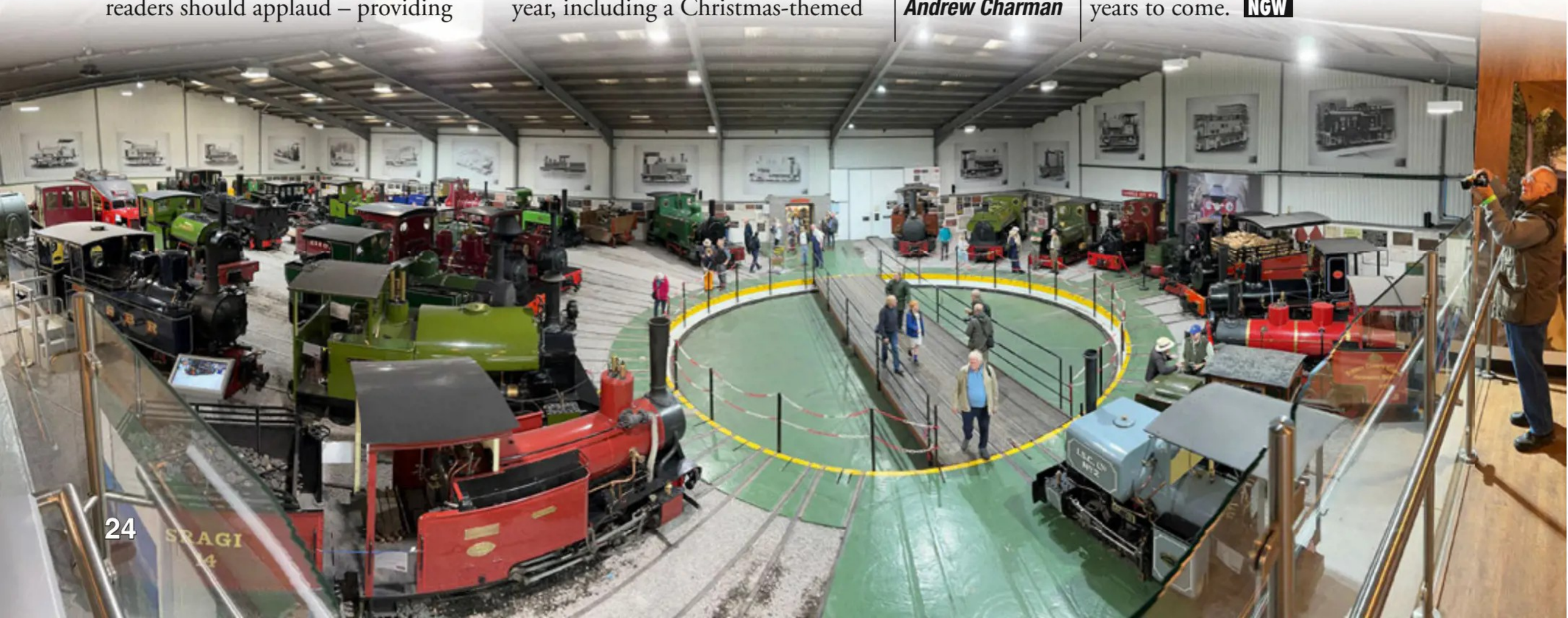
"We here have a number of products which look after each other," Graham said. "Wages are increasing but the biggest challenge now is the (cost of) management of the equipment. Everything is going up – a bearing we might have bought two years ago for £12 is now £55. For boiler repairs and the like we do, the costs are now massive."

Henry added that a Thomas weekend should not upset anyone; "We are purists like anyone else, while bringing in the revenue to ensure we can still maintain the collection. People need to understand the appeal of Thomas to the next generation. My three-year old grandson absolutely loves Thomas, he's reading the Thomas books I was reading when I was his age. It's fantastic because they are the next generation, who once they get over the Thomas stage may well think actually they quite like steam engines, and they will come here and to other places like this."

So as a narrow gauge enthusiast by all means don't go near a Thomas weekend at Statfold or anywhere else – but don't condemn them either. Such events should instead be celebrated, as they bring in the essential funding that will ensure heritage assets such as the remarkable Statfold collection remain to be enjoyed by us enthusiasts – for many years to come. NGW

Above: Peckett 'Harrogate' makes for a convincing 'Percy the Small engine' in the eyes of younger visitors to the Thomas events. *Photo: Rhianne Newton/SNGMT*

Below: What it's all about – the Thomas events provide Statfold with major revenue and exposure to protect the future of this superb collection. *Photo: Andrew Charman*



Blowing a hooley outside...

Storm Amy's best efforts were not enough to prevent our photographers getting great shots at the month's big event on the Ffestiniog Railway – in fact the weather added to the atmosphere...

Right: *Steve Sedgwick*, whose work regularly appears in our pages, definitely made the right decision at this year's Ffestiniog Bygones Gala, securing special permission for a before dawn visit to Boston Lodge works to document the locos being lit up for the day's work. Being on the footplate of the single Fairlie 'Taliesin' as the match went in was both dry and warm...

Below: The rain relented a little to allow the team preparing Taliesin a more comfortable environment in which to give the loco a proper spit and polish.

Above: *Steve Sedgwick* did venture out into the weather on the Friday, and as he stated, the body language in this shot says it all. The gravity slate train was passing Boston Lodge where it picked up the token for the final section to Porthmadog Harbour station – conditions for the crew were very harsh with heavy rain and high winds blowing in against them from the west.

Below: *Karl Heath* added a somewhat appropriate monochromatic tone to this picture on Sunday monring, showing the 'Penrhyn ladies' 'Linda' and 'Blanche' heading onto the Cob as 'Prince' awaited its next turn of duty.

Above: On the Saturday the impacts of Storm Amy were very much in evidence with a swollen river Glaslyn and flooded fields as Taliesin worked over the river bridge at Pont Croesor with a shuttle from Beddgelert.

Below: Back at Porthmadog, some of that much desired autumn lighting made a sadly brief appearance as Prince powered across the Cob at the head of the 17:30 train. *Photos: Karl Heath – for more News Gallery images see page 37*

The Gunpowder Railway

Nick Turner and _Simon Auger_ portray a 2ft 6in gauge line tucked away in woodland on the flanks of the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey in Essex.

Above: The Gunpowder line's 70hp Baguley Drewry 0-4-0DH 'John H. Bowles' (3755/ 1981) with brake van and carriages all converted from goods vans formerly at the RNAD Trecwn site.

Centre left: The passenger vehicles are gloriously typical narrow gauge – converted for goods stock, they are just a little basic. *Photo: Mike Tedstone*

Left A recreation of a ROF Bishopton cordite train and its man-rider, hauled by Hunslet 0-4-0DH 'Chris H' (8819/1979), during a visit to the museum by the Narrow Gauge Railway Society in April 2025.

All uncredited photos by Nick Turner, all taken July 2025 except where stated

The manufacture of gunpowder was first recorded at Waltham Abbey, Essex in the early 17th century and production expanded rapidly over the next hundred years. All raw material and finished product was moved by barge, via canals on the site and then down the River Lea to the River Thames.

Railways first appeared on site in the late 1850s to move the increased amounts of coal, raw materials and manufactured product that resulted from the introduction of steam-powered mills. These early tramways were of 2ft 3in gauge, and used wooden rails to eliminate the risk of sparks, with all the wagons being propelled by hand.

Over the next 40 years the site doubled in size to more than 400 acres in extent and an extensive network of 18-inch gauge tramways was laid down to serve almost every building and processing site, totally replacing the previous 2ft 3in system.

The adoption of 18in gauge provided useful compatibility with the tramways at the Woolwich Arsenal, Chatham Dockyard and Chattenden. Rails were now steel, but wagons were fitted with phosphor-bronze tyres on their wheels, again to prevent sparks. As before, all rail traffic was propelled by hand.

Locomotives only made an appearance during the First World War, by which time the site was concentrating on the manufacture of guncotton and cordite rather than

'black powder'. The first locomotives were four petrol/paraffin engine units built by Ruston Proctor of Lincoln, which seem to have been used predominantly on the 'main line' whilst a growing number of battery electric units moved the wagons to and from the individual buildings.

The Ruston Proctor locomotives were all disposed of by 1925 and more powerful battery electric units took over their duties. Indeed battery electric locomotives were built for the site up until 1941, when a final batch of ten were delivered by Greenwood and Batley of Leeds.

Sadly these locos only had a fairly short service life, as the Royal Gunpowder Mills site was closed for explosive and propellant manufacture in 1943 and re-opened the following year as a Research and Development facility. The railways across the site went into decline after this date and the last section was closed in 1954, with everything going for scrap by the end of that decade. The whole site was wound down over the following two decades and finally closed during the 1990s

Railway revival

When the 177 acres of the Royal Gunpowder Mills North Site was reopened as a heritage and museum site in the late 1990s, it was agreed that the provision of a narrow gauge railway would portray an integral part of the site's history as well as being a visitor attraction in its own right. At the same time the Bicton Woodland Railway in Devon was modernising its rolling stock, and therefore the Mills was able to purchase two 18in gauge locomotives and a selection of carriages and wagons, mostly of Woolwich Arsenal origin, with the intention of creating a line at Waltham Abbey.

For various reasons, including the designation of the area where the new line was proposed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, plus the amount of work needed on the stock to make it operational again, this plan never materialised and eventually the Woolwich locomotives moved to the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust, where they remain today.

And then, in 2003, a locomotive with a selection of wagons and some track became available from the redundant 2ft 6in gauge system at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Bishopton in Scotland, and travelled down to Essex to form the nucleus of what is now the Gunpowder Railway.

The railway today

Since those first arrivals on site, a small but dedicated team of volunteers has quietly built an entire »

Above: Hunslet 0-4-0DM 'Gilbert' (8828/1979), ex-NCB Nantgarw, on left and on right Chris H, ex-ROF Bishopton, prepare to extract a rake of restored wagons from the museum/display shed.

Right: A replica created in 2023/24 of an 18in gauge Geenwood and Batley 0-4-0BE (1671/1941) used on the original Royal Gunpowder Mills internal rail system until 1954.

Below: 140HP Ruhrthaler 0-4-0DH 'Il Tuono Blu' (3920/1969), ex-Rome Public Works Company, restored to working order in June 2024 after 15 years in open storage.

railway, which now has a three-quarter mile main running line for passenger trains, plus an extensive yard with workshops, running and stock storage sheds. There is also an ongoing project to create a covered museum area to display a selection of restored wagons specifically designed around the various stages of the manufacture of cordite.

Four-strong fleet

The line currently has four working locomotives, with the pride of the fleet being RNAD Baguley Drewry DH8-88, the prototype for the recent Bachmann 009 scale model. The most unusual of the four is a German Ruhrthaler machine that was first used in Italy, working on the tunneling contract for Rome's metro line 'A'.

Recently completed is a static replica of one of the 1941-built 18in gauge Greenwood and Batley battery electric locomotives originally used on the Waltham Abbey site. It is displayed on a low-bed transporter wagon and highlights the difference in size between the original and current rolling stock.

The wagon fleet all originally worked at Royal Naval Armament Depot and Royal Ordnance Factory sites, and includes examples of a waste burning wagon, dough wagon, Clarkson case carrier and cordite rack drying van, as well as the more familiar RNAD sliding-roof ordnance vans. All are subject to an ongoing meticulous restoration programme which is designed to inform visitors about the range of railway vehicles used exclusively on these formerly 'closed' sites. NGW

More Information

For more information on the railway, visit www.royalgunpowdermills.com/the-gunpowder-railway

Hidden Gem

*A visiting Narrow Gauge Railway Society group recently described the Gunpowder Railway as 'something of a hidden gem'. It is a view shared by **NGW** contributor Mike Tedstone, who was there on Sunday, 10th August:*

The Gunpowder Mills site is about a half-hour walk from Waltham Cross station, served from Stratford on Sundays by Anglia. The platform for Gunpowder Railway departures is a considerable walk from the main entrance and by no means obvious to find.

There were really very few visitors to the Gunpowder Mills on this day, and even fewer to the narrow gauge railway part of the venue. When we arrived, we had no idea when a train would run, nor could we see where to go!

Thankfully, a phone call to the train-crew meant that the circa 1400 departure was held for my companion and myself. There were already about nine or ten on board, and we just about filled the two carriages and van consist.

The terminus of the line was reached after about five minutes. The loco run-round took place in the platform, Powdermill Cut, and we returned after a brake test.

We left the railway at about 14.45, as did everybody else, as it was by no means clear if there would actually be another departure at nominally 15.00, it was so quiet.

It was all very friendly, but distinctly off the beaten track, if I can put it kindly that way, and certainly fascinating as an example of 2ft 6in gauge in the UK using ex-MOD rolling stock.

Without ***NGW***, I am not sure I would even have known that this line existed...

"It was distinctly off the beaten track and certainly fascinating..."

Above: John H Bowles works another RNAD demonstration train out of Powdermill Cut during the NGRS visit in April 2025.

Below: Gilbert and the restored RNAD armaments wagons outside the museum/ display shed.

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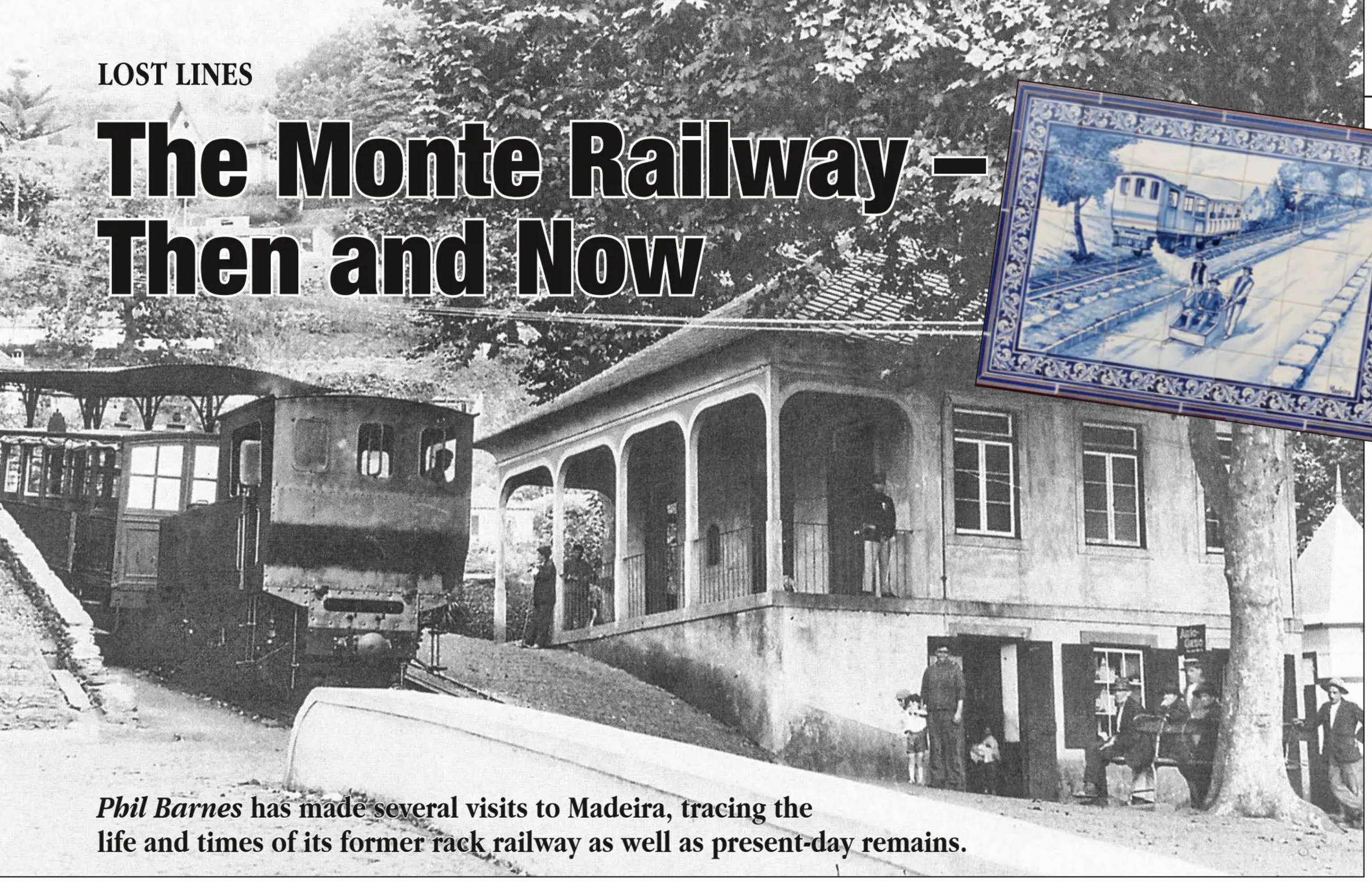
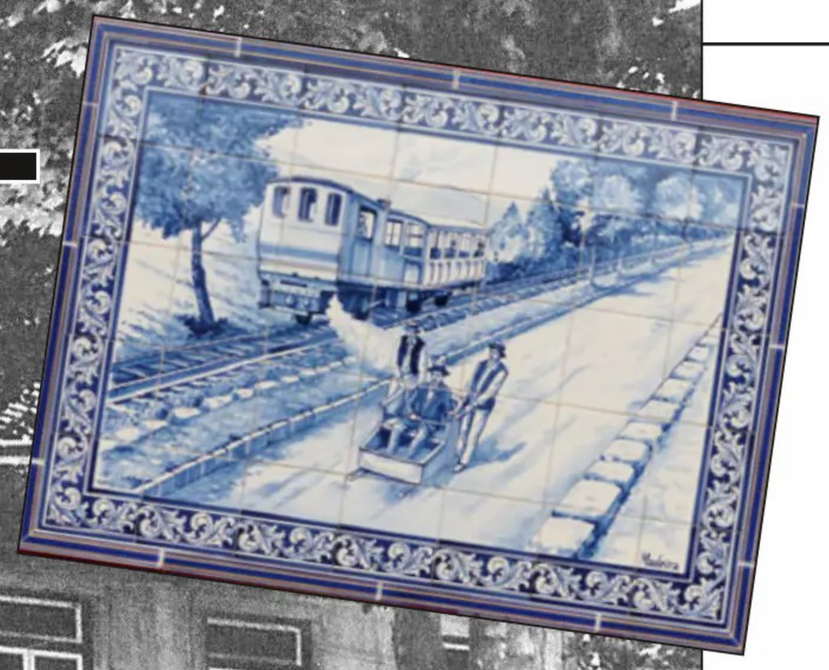
LOST LINES

The Monte Railway – Then and Now





***Phil Barnes* has made several visits to Madeira, tracing the life and times of its former rack railway as well as present-day remains.**

The idea for a railway on the Portuguese islands of Madeira came from Antonio Joaquim Marques of Lisbon, who obtained a concession from Funchal City Council to build a line. There were several reasons for this scheme, although a main one was that people needed to get to the pilgrimage church of Nossa Senhora do Monte, built in the highlands of Funchal island. Once the railway was built, they were able to do so in large numbers. Additionally, Monte was an area for tourism and recuperation, and many of Funchal's richest families lived there, so a reliable means of transport was needed.

The concession was granted in 1887 when the Portuguese engineer Raoul Mesnier du Ponsard, who was of French parentage and also an ex-apprentice of Gustav Eiffel, was engaged to design the metre-gauge railway. He had previously designed three street funiculars in Lisbon, so was a known quantity in this field. After the costing and planning of how the railway would be built, the local council approved the project in January 1891. Du Ponsard was appointed supervising engineer, but a little while previously, in July 1890, the concession had been transferred to Captain Manuel Alexandre de Sousa of Madeira.

Above: A postcard purchased in a souvenir shop shows a train calling at Monte station. The inset shows on a house behind Monte station one of several 'Azulejos' – distinctive blue coloured tiles depicting the line and the famous wicker sledges. May 2024.

Photos by Phil Barnes except where stated

The initial political and planning issues were sorted in true Anglo-Portuguese style at a time when many of Portugal's railway needs were satisfied by English companies. The Monte Railway, as it became known, was a British-owned company, registered as the Mount Railway Co Ltd of 24-25 Fenchurch Street, London EC3. Locally it was termed the Caminho de Ferro do Monte.

The building phase started in 1891 and the line would not be completed to its full length of just under four kilometres until 1912. Ultimately there were three main stations, five secondary stations and five halts along the route. The base station at Pombal was built through 1891 and the line had reached Levada de Santa Luzia by July 1893 when this section was then opened.

Work progressed 'up-hill' and by August 1894 had extended to Atalhintio in the parish of Monte. This station remained the terminus until 1912 when the line finally reached Terreiro da Luta, 850 metres above sea level. Here a 'panoramic restaurant' was created for tourists and the area designated a viewpoint. Most of the tourists were ship's passengers from Union Castle or Royal Mail Line vessels which had anchored at Funchal for re-victualling and coaling purposes.

Rolling stock and operation

The line used the Riggenbach rack and pinion system. The first four locomotives were 0-4-0RTs (rack

tanks) built by Maschinenfabrik Esslingen and carrying the numbers 1 to 4; they were delivered in 1893, 1894, 1903 and 1912 with works numbers 2568, 2654, 3524 and 3668 respectively. Each time a loco was delivered, a passenger car with a capacity for 60 came with it.

Over the years the railway endured problems, principally financial issues and poor maintenance, and these came to a head in September 1919 when the boiler of locomotive no 4 exploded, resulting in four deaths. This caused a lack of confidence in the railway, further compounding its problems, but still a fifth loco was obtained in 1925. The 0-4-2RT was supplied by SLM of Winterthur (works number 3120) and also came with a carriage.

Some sources suggest that the damaged no 4 and one of the original 1890s-built pair were dismantled and their parts used to build a sixth loco 'in house' on the island, but information about this is sketchy.

In typical mountain railway style, such as on the Snowdon Mountain Railway, carriages on the Monte were always pushed up the hill and never connected to the loco. Once the railway was fully open, trains were crossed at Livra Mento and Monte where there were loops. These were signaled by switch indicators that rotated and therefore showed the way the track was set.

The railway carried on making few headlines until 1932, when another accident in the form of a derailment further dented confidence in the line among potential visitors.

Through the 1930s, both tourists and locals cut back on using the line, which further added to the financial pressures and maintenance issues. Additional competition from the expanding road network led to operation ceasing in 1939. With the onset of the Second World War and a lack of visitors/passengers, the railway was forced to declare bankruptcy and the last train operated in 1943.

The line and its rolling stock were dismantled and scrapped, the Monte Railway being consigned to the history books. But this was not the end of the story, because the company still existed 20 years later, with an office and manager to administer the company's properties.

Still to be seen

Reminders of the line to this day include Pombal station, the viaduct at Monte along with the station/ museum and the site of the basic station at Terreiro da Luta, with the now closed hotel and 'panoramic restaurant' still perched above this former terminus. »

Facing page, bottom left: A panoramic view of Monte station, May 2022. The railway ran up the hill from left to right behind the building – opposite the two red cars was a station yard.

Above: A photo displayed in the Monte Station Museum (MSM) shows 0-4-2RT no 5 and carriage on Monte viaduct in the 1930s.

Above right: The viaduct in May 2024 seen from the winding road that passes the station. Clearly apparent is the height of the structure with the house and garden dwarfed below.

Centre right: A train arriving at Pombal in the first decade of the 20th century. At bottom right, one of the carriages is in the station yard.
Photo: MSM

Right: The rack plunging down to Pombal, Funchal spread out below and much activity at sea.
Photo: MSM

The station at Pombal is located on the corner of the Rua do Pombal and the aptly named Rua do Comboio (train street). This building looks very complete, albeit a bit run down and once housed the railway's office upstairs with the ticket office and waiting room downstairs. Next to it is the former workshop which became a garage, and next to that a small yard now has a palm-tree growing on it.

Looking up the road, it is clearly evident that it was once the course of a railway. This uphill route can be traced all the way to Monte, passing the sites of the stations at Santa Luzia and a halt for the Grand Hotel Belmont (which wasn't constructed until 1926), prior to crossing the viaduct topped with a cobbled road and reaching the station at Monte. The five-arched viaduct can be easily seen from both sides and these days spans a garden.

Museum opened

The former station at Monte lay derelict until 2016, when it was acquired and refurbished by Funchal City Council. It became a museum and interpretation centre on 24th June 2021, exactly 109 years to the day since opening of the station and the railway up to Terreiro da Luta.

Monte's station and viaduct are adjacent to a 180-degree bend in the main road, which has bus stops nearby as testament to one of today's means of transport to the area. Also nearby is the Nosa Senhora do Monte church, starting point of the famous wicker sledge run, and a bit beyond them are the Palace Gardens and top station of the cable car (teleferico).

On the subject of stations, I found the one at Terreiro da Luta by walking along the road from the war memorial statue courtesy of a stop on a coach tour I was doing at the time. It was then possible to look down onto the site of the station and photograph it.

Reverting to the station/museum at Monte, this is free to enter and is open between 10am to 5pm on Tuesdays to Saturdays. The museum's displays consist mainly of boards with old photos, maps, diagrams and timetables on them and there is also a cabinet with documents, badges and tickets in it; these are all primarily upstairs. Downstairs is a desk and typewriter plus the headlamp of loco no 5 and there is also a model of the former train. The museum has an attendant and a short video shows the railway at work.

Additionally, around the Funchal area can be found azulejos – blue tile-based pictures showing the railway. During my first visit to Madeira in 2022, it was the time of the flower festival and in the Avenue Arriaga (central Funchal), was a mock-up of the train – in a flower bed! This railway may have only had a 50-year life span, but there still remain plenty of reminders of its former existence. **NGW**

Above: Looking down on the site of the former terminus at Terreiro da Luta with the now closed hotel above it on the right. The railway curved up to the station from the direction of Funchal, seen far below. June 2025.

Upper left: The former Pombal station, looking slightly the worse for wear, at the bottom of the Rua do Comboio, June 2025.

Centre left: The museum displays include this model of the Monte train, also slightly the worse for wear.

Left: Despite the railway being long gone, it has not been forgotten and featured as part of the May 2022 flower festival in central Funchal. The train was made of wooden boards with 'C F M' denoting the Caminho de Ferro do Monte.

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Above: It hasn't all been about the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones event, illustrated on our centre pages, in October! Traditionally the month also means photo charters and on 13th October *Andrew Simmonds* caught this splendid shot of the Talyllyn Railway's 'Dolgoch' accelerating past the old watering point at Ty Dwr – since its restoration this spot has become a favourite for photographs of the pioneer line.

Below: *Stuart Avery*, meanwhile, went rather further afield, to California, where on 6th October he captured Roaring Camp & Big Trees Narrow Gauge Railroad no 1 'Dixiana' blowing down to clear the boiler of impurities on the approach to Felton with an afternoon train from Bear Mountain. The Class B Shay was built by the Lima Locomotive works in 1912 for the W.M Ritter Lumber Company – there is nothing quite like a Shay...

The end that was a beginning

A low-key celebration on the Talyllyn Railway last month saw the running of a special train to commemorate a very important 75th anniversary, and *Andrew Charman* was there.

The approaching end to the year also brings to a close celebrations of Railway 200, the bicentenary of the opening of what is generally regarded to be the world's first public railway, the Stockton & Darlington. The year has seen several major events including the 'Greatest Gathering' in Derby, the journey of the replica of the S&D locomotive 'Locomotion' from Stockton to Darlington in September and for narrow gauge enthusiasts the remarkable event at the Ffestiniog Railway in June which saw '200 wheels on The Cob'.

On 6th October, however, there was another, much more low-key commemoration, of an event much more recent than 200 years but of equal importance to both the narrow gauge and railway preservation as a whole. On 6th October 1950, 75 years ago, the last train of the Sir Henry Haydn Jones era ran on the Talyllyn Railway in mid-Wales.

Haydn Jones, owner of the railway since 1911, had promised to keep the 2ft 3in gauge line running for his lifetime, despite the quarry that it was built to serve having ceased operations in 1946. Following his death in July 1950 his widow agreed that the Talyllyn should see out the season but after that it was widely expected to close and be taken up for scrap.

Exactly 75 years lie between the two photos on this page, taken on 6th October 1950 and 2025, at almost the same spot on Tywyn Wharf station – original loco 'Dolgoch', carriage no 1 and brake van no 5. *Photo above: TR archive. All other photos by Andrew Charman unless credited*

Of course very few enthusiasts are unaware of what actually happened – a group of Midlands enthusiasts, led by author and canal enthusiast Tom Rolt, took over the line and it reopened in May 1951 as the world's first preserved railway, creating the heritage railway movement.

It was David Mitchell, former President of the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society, who highlighted the significance of the approaching anniversary and suggested that it

Visit our forum at http://www.narrowgauge.forumer.com

should be properly commemorated. Remarkably, the railway was able to roster the complete train set from that day in 1950 for the special run on 6th October – the exact 75th anniversary of that last train. Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch' headed four-wheeled carriage no 1 and the unique four-wheeled brake van and travelling booking office.

One of the reasons for a low-key celebration was the very limited accommodation – aside from the two loco crew and guard Luke Ryan, there was space for 12 in the carriage and ***NGW***'s editor was very honoured to be invited to join the event.

Eras in history

Others in this select party included David Mitchell and personalities effectively marking the earliest days, mid-period and present of Talyllyn preservation. Current TR chair David Ventry represented the present, with the early days of preservation marked by the well-known rail transport professional and enthusiast Michael Whitehouse – a man who holds directorship roles at several heritage organisations, Michael is the son of Pat Whitehouse, one of the original pioneers that got the preservation of the Talyllyn off the ground. And also present was Dan Poulson, great grandson of Sir Henry Haydn Jones, providing an essential link with the Talyllyn's pre-preservation history.

Not surprisingly with such a knowledgeable party the conversation proved fascinating to this media imposter, including such gems as the fact that there was briefly a scheme to extend the railway further south to the larger coastal port of Aberdovey, and a general consensus that the Bryn Eglwys slate quarry, that the TR was opened to serve in 1865, was never a large enough undertaking to justify having its own railway.

Above: Apart from the significantly improved look of the train and platform this scene replicates that witnessed by passengers in October 1950.

Below: The Haydn Jones and early preservation eras of the Talyllyn represented by Dan Poulson and Michael Whitehouse.

Below right: The train conformed to historical accuracy, the loco replenished from the old Dolgoch water column.

Events soon proved this – through the decade after opening the quarry's annual output reached nowhere near the expectations of its owners and financial problems abounded. As early as 1879 quarry workers found themselves working a four-day week due to excessive stocks.

William McConnel, of the family who had built the railway, took over the slate company in 1881 but while a new market in tourism steadily grew, the fortunes of Bryn Eglwys did not and in 1909 quarrying was stopped, with plans soon being made to close the railway.

At this point a saviour appeared in the form of Henry Haydn Jones, newly elected as the Liberal MP for Merionethshire in which the TR ran. In 1911 he bought both quarry and railway and restarted slate production, services on the Talyllyn continuing as if nothing had happened.

Investment but decline

Apart a brief closure in 1920 during a dispute with the North Wales Quarrymen's Union, the next four decades passed in mid Wales with few headlines around the Talyllyn. Haydn Jones did regularly invest in measures to keep the line operational, but it equally became a millstone around his neck as slate demand declined and the rise of road transport ate into the line's passenger numbers.

The outbreak of the Second World War exacerbated the situation and by 1945 the railway was struggling to survive. Loco no 1 'Talyllyn' was out of service needing heavy repairs and Haydn Jones paid for Dolgoch to have an overhaul at the Atlas Foundry »

in Shrewsbury. Then on Boxing Day 1946 a major rock fall in the quarry finally ended slate production.

Not surprisingly the Talyllyn was not included in the nationalisation of British railways in 1948 – some maps even showed the line as disused. But despite all this Haydn Jones had vowed to keep the railway running through his lifetime and he fulfilled his promise, reputedly even trying to find a family member to take it on after his passing.

Haydn Jones's death at the age of 86 on 2nd July 1950 left the future of the railway in the hands of his widow, who instructed the TR manager Edward Thomas to complete the season, the final train running on 6th October. After that the future looked bleak but behind the scenes a rescue plan had been underway for some time.

Tom Rolt had first visited the line during the war and after some false starts, including a proposal to rip up the 2ft 3in gauge rails and replace them with a 15-inch gauge tourist railway, a public meeting in Birmingham on 11th October resulted in the formation of the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society. The TR's 1951 season started as planned and the rest, as we know, has become a pivotal part of heritage railway history...

Caught on film

Many discussions and in some cases memories from those early years made for an interesting trip to Abergynolwyn, where while the participants enjoyed a specially prepared 1950s-style buffet, the train was remarshalled to place the brake van at the rear for the return journey, just as had happened in 1950. There is but one known photo of this train, which appears at the start of this feature, but remarkably there is also a film of it in existence, made by a traveller on the train who persuaded the crew to carry out the shunt so he could film out of the brake van's rear window during the down journey.

Your editor thoroughly enjoyed his unusual day out at the Talyllyn and a glimpse into past history, along with speculation as to what might have been. It's hard to believe that the Talyllyn would have evaded the scrap men without the arrival of the pioneering preservation movement.

"I should have run it without any of your help..."

Above: Time for reflection on the return journey at Brynglas – again a scene little changed from the original.

Below: A new era begins – the first Preservation Society Chairman, Bill Trinder, cuts a tape to mark the start of services on 14th May 1951. ***Photo: TR Archive***

A comment, however, from Edward Thomas (like Haydn Jones commemorated in the names of ex-Corris Railway locos nos 3 and 4 which have been on the Talyllyn since 1951), suggests that the line still might have defied the odds, especially as Lady Haydn was known to be keen to see it survive.

The comment came during an early example of clashes of opinions that all democratic heritage organisations who rely on volunteers will be familiar with, documented in *Railway Adventure*, Rolt's book describing his role as General Manager in the first two preservation seasons and a must-read for all narrow gauge enthusiasts.

The fledgling TRPS had marked the traditional opening of the season on Whit Monday in mid-May 1951, with effectively shuttle trains between Tywyn and the intermediate station of Rhydyronen to allow essential track repairs on the rest of the line. The intention was, however, to run over the full route to Abergynolwyn in the main season starting a couple of weeks later.

A few days before the scheduled start of services some members of the TRPS committee decided running over the full line would be too high a risk and that initially trains should only go to Rhydyronen.

Rolt argued strongly that such a move would doom the whole venture, but as he wrote; "It was Mr Edward Thomas who, in the event, really clinched matters. I shall never forget his contribution to this 11th hour meeting. It was characteristically brief and to the point. 'I think you are taking things much too seriously, gentlemen,' he said. 'Let me tell you that if Lady Haydn had asked me to run the railway this year I should have run it without any of your help.'" NGW

Going large...

The latest Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition showed the major influence of the narrow gauge in the largest model scales, as *Andrew Charman* reports.

In this issue we take narrow gauge modelling to its ceiling... To the point where modelling becomes model engineering, with model locomotives large enough and powerful enough to pull their owner and in many cases a train load of passengers around a track.

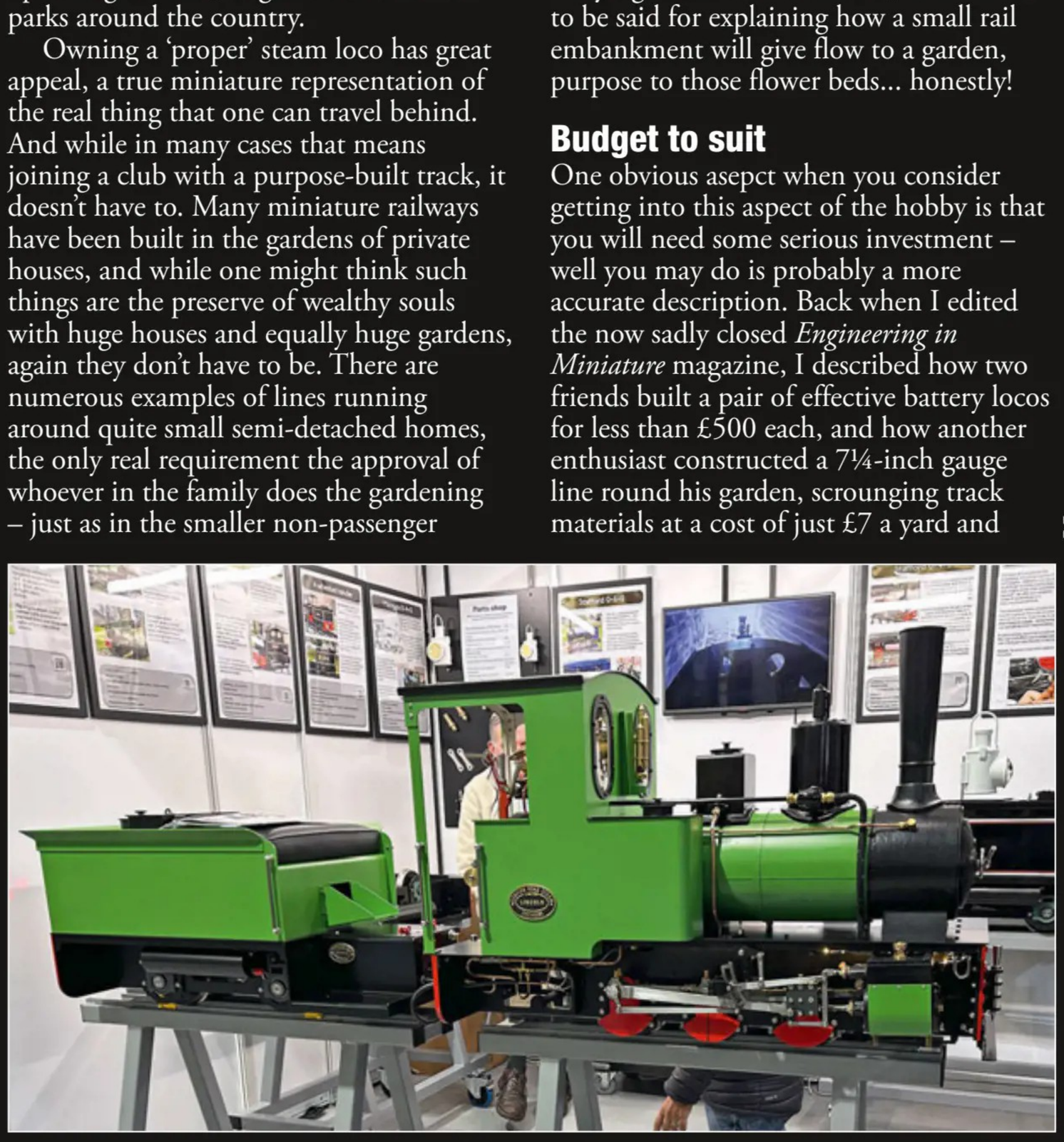
The occasion stimulating this feature is the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition, held every October at the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre. I've been attending this show for many years, and one aspect I know I will always enjoy are the many narrow gauge examples that always feature among the models.

Narrow gauge prototypes produce much 'chunker' models and today have a major influence whichever of the three popular track gauges one adopts – 3½-inch gauge, mainly for raised track, 5-inch gauge which can be practically employed on a ground-level line and is popular among those with limited space, and 7¼-inch gauge, large enough for 'professional' passenger carrying – there are a number of such lines operating at clubs, in garden centres and parks around the country.

Owning a 'proper' steam loco has great appeal, a true miniature representation of the real thing that one can travel behind. And while in many cases that means joining a club with a purpose-built track, it doesn't have to. Many miniature railways have been built in the gardens of private houses, and while one might think such things are the preserve of wealthy souls with huge houses and equally huge gardens, again they don't have to be. There are numerous examples of lines running around quite small semi-detached homes, the only real requirement the approval of whoever in the family does the gardening – just as in the smaller non-passenger carrying scales such as 16mm, there is a lot to be said for explaining how a small rail embankment will give flow to a garden, purpose to those flower beds... honestly!

Budget to suit

One obvious asepct when you consider getting into this aspect of the hobby is that you will need some serious investment – well you may do is probably a more accurate description. Back when I edited the now sadly closed *Engineering in Miniature* magazine, I described how two friends built a pair of effective battery locos for less than £500 each, and how another enthusiast constructed a 7¼-inch gauge line round his garden, scrounging track materials at a cost of just £7 a yard and »



Above: The ultimate in miniature steam – this 7¼-inch gauge 2-4-2, one of two sister locos built and known as the River class, has run at the public Moors Valley Railway but spends most of its time running round the (admittedly rather large) garden of a private house.

Right: This Feldbahn 0-6-0 from Station Road Steam is typical of the kit-build locos today offered in both 5 and 7¼-inch gauges.

All photos by Andrew Charman unless stated

building himself a battery loco for £400...

Proper steam in this scale will indeed cost. Most of the locomotives displayed at shows such as the Midlands event have been built by model engineers in their home workshops over many years, using commercially available components such as castings or making their own. Of course such locos do regularly come up for sale – a glance at a well-known dealer's site while writing this feature revealed a 5-inch gauge battery loco at £975, a 5-inch gauge 0-6-0ST to the popular 'Metre Maid' design at £2750, and a 7¼-inch gauge Kerr, Stuart Wren style 0-4-2ST for £4,500.

More recent times have seen the growth of professional companies, such as the likes of Maxitrak and Station Road Steam, offering locos either ready-built or as machined kits for the buyer to bolt together at their own pace – a great way to get to know one's loco is to build it. Now we are talking on average around £15,000 here, but for such an investment the buyer gets a top-quality locomotive.

What a scamp

Something much cheaper, and without the intensive looking after a steam loco requires, is the 'Scamp', a 7¼-inch petrol locomotive that in standard form really is a shrunken version of the Lister auto truck, well-known in narrow gauge industry. Made by a company called CMD Engineering, it again comes as a simple kit at prices starting from £2,900 – as the picture at left shows, once built it's a whole lot of fun...

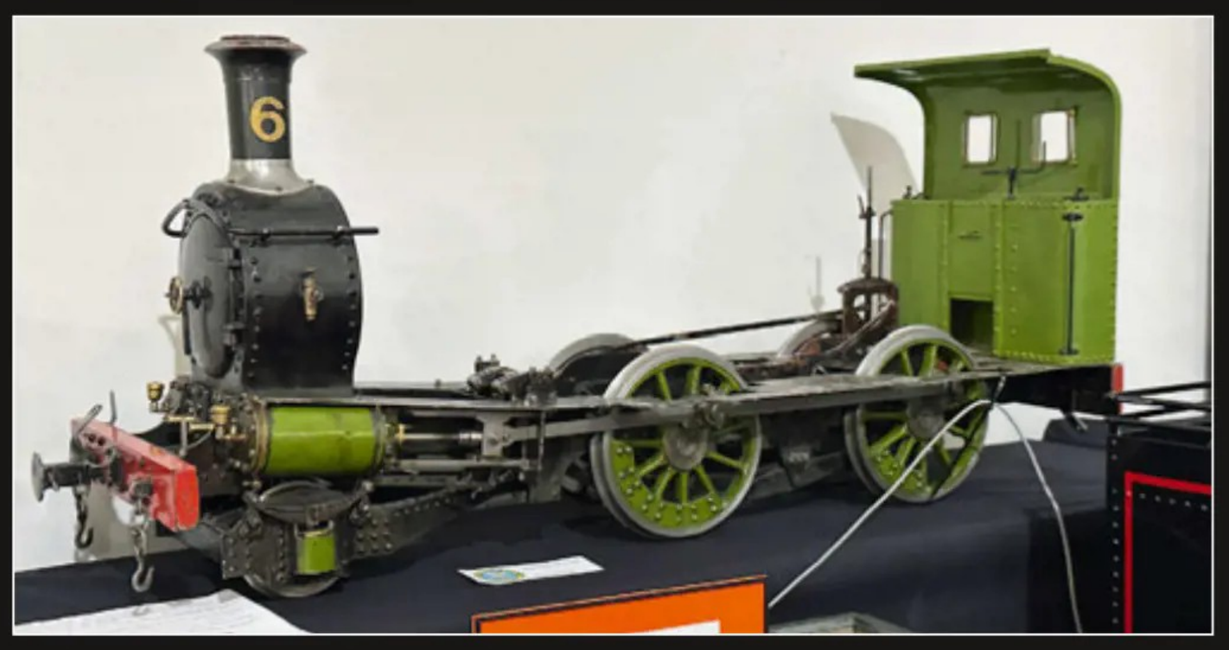
Just as in the smaller scales, there is a whole cottage industry offering just about everything needed to build one's own miniature railway – while traditional model engineering has declined in recent decades, there has been a resurgence in those desiring their own miniature railways and several companies now provide the components and materials to make turning dreams into reality as simple a process as possible. There's also a highly active community to support one's activities, both in terms of model engineering clubs and organisations such as the 7¼-inch Gauge Society (www.sevenandaquarter.org)

Track, for example – once it was a case of securing lengths of steel or aluminium bars and cutting up strips of wood and creosoting them to build one's own. Today one can buy ready-made lengths of track in the same way as for indoor small scales, this combining aluminum rail with the correct profile and sleepers made from recycled plastic – something heritage railways are increasingly adopting in the full-size world.

So yes, in general having your own railway in the garden with locomotives you can ride behind is not going to come cheap – but the rewards in terms of sheer enjoyment of a hobby are not to be dismissed lightly... NGW

Left: just as in other scales the quarry Hunslet is perennially popular. This 5-inch gauge version is modelled on the Llanberis Lake Railway's 'Elidir'.

Below: 3ft gauge prototypes, such as this under construction Isle of Man Railway 'Peverill', make for more compact models.



Far left: Tracklaying is easy with the products available today – and even full-size lines used recycled plastic sleepers these days.

Left: A fine accurate model of a Glyn Valley Tramway granite wagon, but also an excellent driving truck for running directly behind one's loco.

Centre left: The owner of this 7¼-inch gauge Ruston-style battery loco built it for a mere £400. *Photo: Simon Mace*

Below left: Andrew on a 'Scamp' – easy and relatively cheap to build, great fun to drive. *Photo: Megan Charman*

Right: There's a prototype for everything in model engineering, and when you build them in 7¼-inch gauge pretty big models can result. This De Winton vertical-boiler loco has one major departure from the full-size original in the cause of practicality, the firebox fed from a door above the footplate rather than from a chute below.

■ Regular *NGW* correspondent Dave Pinniger was among many who attended the Gala on the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway over the weekend of 26th-27th September, and he took both his 16mm and 7/8ths scale live steam De Winton vertical boiler locomotives to run on the layout at Woody Bay station, 'Woody Gate'.

With the Gala attractions including visiting full-size De Winton loco 'Chaloner' from the Leighton Buzzard Railway, Dave grabbed the opportunity to pose his 7/8ths loco 'Vron' on its full-size inspiration. *Photos: Dave Pinniger*

MODEL LINES

March date up north

An early entry for those brand-new diaries is the Narrow Gauge North model show. The 2026 edition of this popular event will be held on Saturday 14th March at its usual venue of the Civic Hall in Pudsey, Leeds, from 10:30am to 4:30pm.

The venue, just five minutes walk from Pudsey station, has a large free car park. Disabled access will be available to all areas except the stage and hot and cold refreshments will be on offer.

Details of the layouts appearing are to be confirmed but there is bound to be much to enjoy – the 2025 show attracted more than 20 layouts along with a host of traders. Details will be posted on the website, narrowgaugenorth.org.uk and on facebook.com/ngnorth.

Garden rail show date

While you have those diaries out, the 2026 Midlands Garden Rail Show will be held on Saturday 28th February and Sunday 1st March at its usual venue of the Warwickshire Event Centre near Leamington Spa.

Organisers promise plenty of inspiration for anyone planning a garden railway be it live steam, gas or coal fired, battery or electric, with at least 15 layouts in the larger gauges and scales including Gauge 1, O Gauge, 16mm and G Scale and more, along with a wide selection of traders.

Details of the exhibition and suppliers attending will be updated over the coming months on the www.midlandsgardenrailshow.co.uk website and on the Meridienne Exhibitions Ltd Facebook page. Advance tickets can already be ordered through the website.

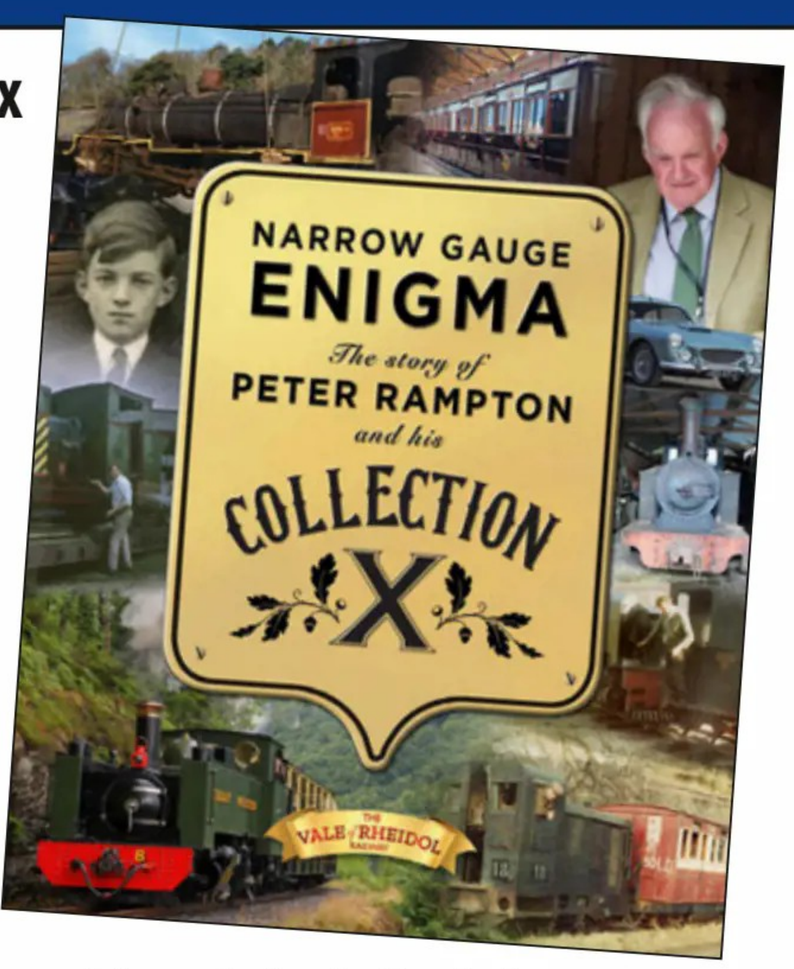
Tubby time...

Latest in the ever-growing range of 009 rolling stock from Brooks 3D are these useful little mine tubs. They are supplied as simple kits for three wagons at £13 per kit. Brooks can also supply versions to run on 6.5mm (Z gauge) track, to represent typical 18-inch gauge mine lines. More details can be had at www.brooks3dmodels.com

ON THE SHELF

Narrow Gauge Enigma – The Story of Peter Rampton and his Collection X

Stephen Phillips



■ Very rarely, a new book appears on the narrow gauge scene which is considered a milestone publication – the two-volume *Iron Sherpa* production on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway springs immediately to mind. *Narrow Gauge Enigma* certainly qualifies for this status.

Peter Rampton's name will not be nearly as familiar to many a narrow gauge enthusiast as will 'Collection X', a half-century mystery of a stack of locomotives stored on a farm somewhere in Surrey beyond the prying eyes of enthusiasts. Now the full story of the collection and the man who created it has been documented.

Peter Rampton acquired his first loco in 1968, a Couillet 0-6-0T found in Spain. He went on to travel the world in search of redundant narrow gauge locos, eventually amassing around 50 of them, together with other artefacts such as bogie carriages from the Isle of Man.

All were stored in barns at Peter's farm in Surrey, and after a couple of early open days and encounters with less than honest enthusiasts they were kept in complete secrecy, the farm very much off limits and even home-made booby traps set up amongst the collection to deter intruders.

Peter had every intention of restoring everything, setting up a museum and running on his own narrow gauge line – the trackbed of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and the Bridport branch in Devon were early sites considered and rejected. He played a pivotal role in the setting up of the Brecon Mountain Railway by his friend Tony Hills, and eventually bought the Vale of Rheidol Railway when it was sold off by British Railways, then providing consistent major investment to turn it into the world-class line it is today, and intending it to be the home of his museum.

Peter died in 2019 and since then VoR general manager Llŷr ap Iolo has led a project to document his life, with the book's author Stephen Phillips spending years delving into the private Rampton archives, surveying and drawing the locomotives and carriages in the collection.

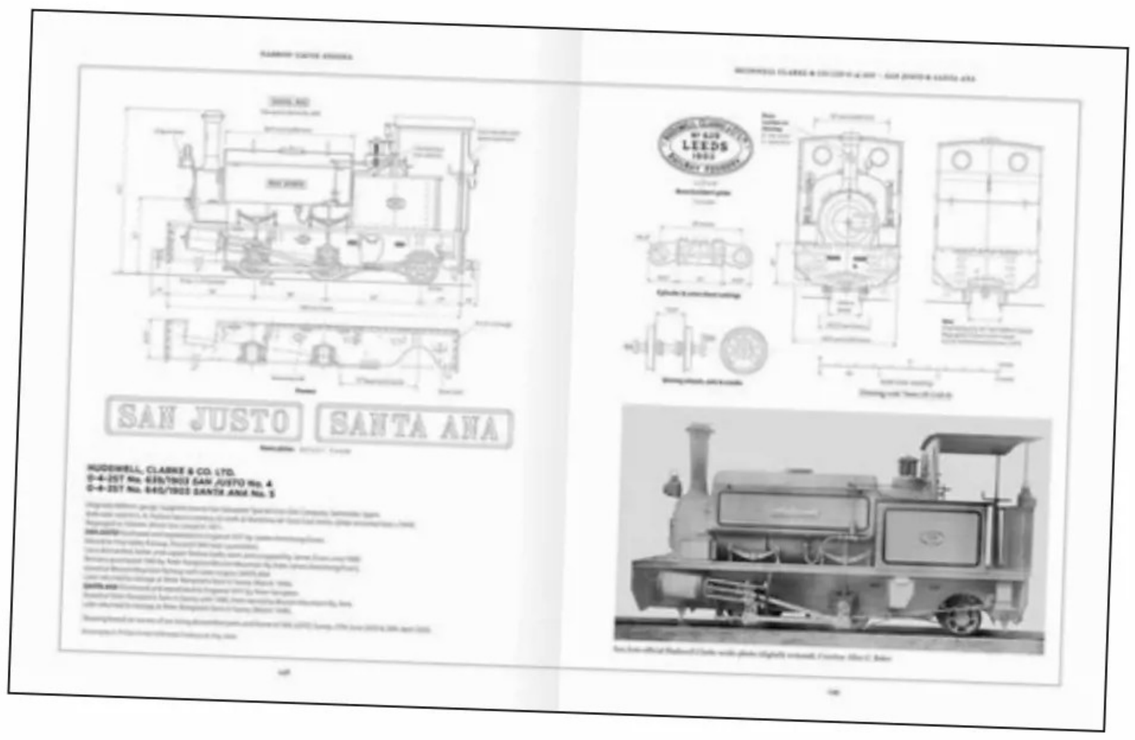
The result is a sumptuous hardback running to 416 pages, following the precedent of previous VoR publications of being printed on top-quality glossy paper, and with content of equal quality.

Peter's story is told in full, including beyond his railway interest such as his passion for AC cars. ***NGW*** readers, however, will be most enthused by the full descriptions of each item in the collection, including hundreds of pictures of locos in their original environments, and at the Surrey farm. Modellers will find particular fascination in the highly detailed general arrangement drawings of each item, meticulously reproduced in 7mm scale.

This is the kind of book that one can read in detail but also dip into, choosing a particular item in the collection to read about. Many pages bring surprises – such as the fact that Peter was still collecting just a few years before he passed away – in a book that is without doubt the definitive story of Collection X, lifting the lid fully on one of the greatest narrow gauge mysteries.

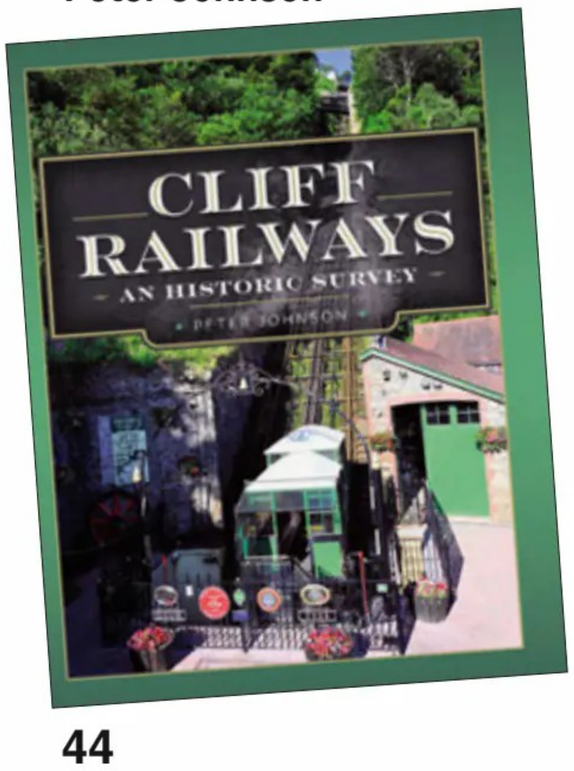
Family asking what you would like for Christmas? We highly recommend pointing them at this book... ***AC***

Published by Vale of Rheidol Railway
ISBN 978-0-95445-467-8
Web: www.rheidolrailway.co.uk/shop
Price: £80.00



Cliff Railways – An Historic Survey

Peter Johnson



■ Well-known narrow gauge author Peter Johnson again steps into the wider rail sector, focusing on an interesting and unusual subject. Many readers may not realise that a number of cliff railways were built to narrow gauge, mostly between the 3ft 8in to 4ft range. Ten of the 30 locations featured in the book are such lines, from familiar ones that have featured in our pages such as between Lynton and Lynmouth in Devon and at Saltburn-by-the-Sea in North Yorkshire, to lesser-known facilities that did not survive, prime examples being on the Isle of Man and the Clifton Rocks Railway in Bristol.

The author is renowned for his thorough research and that shows here – the descriptions of all the lines, narrow, standard and broad, make for fascinating reading and the book benefits immensely from the plentiful period images Peter has found to compliment his own photos taken while travelling the UK documenting the lines that remain today. ***AC***

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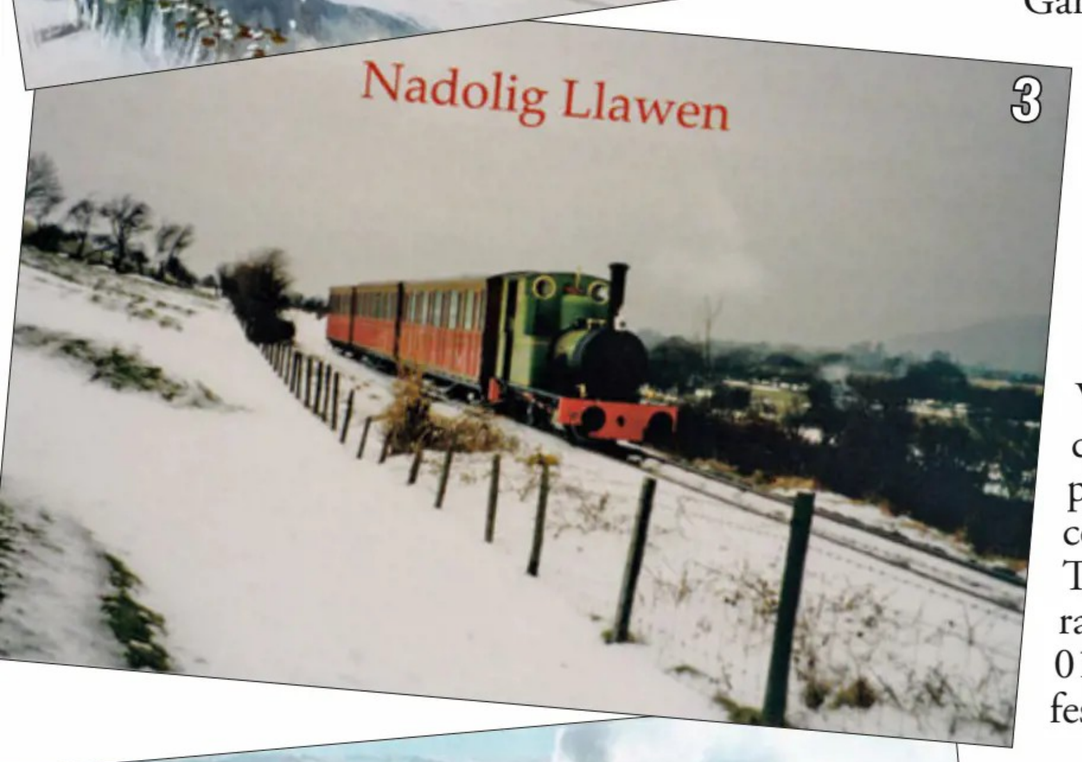

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■ We at ***NGW*** are always keen to showcase the Christmas cards and calendars that some of our heritage railways offer for sale at this time of year, simply because all the proceeds from such sales go directly towards helping to keep those railways operating, instead of into the coffers of some retail giant.

Buying some of these cards is a great way of meeting those expectations placed on us all in the festive season while also helping our railways – sending something more individual and satisfying than the general masses on sale at places such as supermarkets.

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway traditionally produces two new card designs each year, one for each of the two railways, and they are always very attractive. This year's pairing, again the work of artist Rebecca Kitchen, show Tasmanian Garratt K1 rushing through a snowy Welsh Highland landscape (*pic 1*) and a double-headed quarry Hunslet and England 0-4-0 train working across the Ffestiniog's Cob sea wall with some slightly suspect looking loco crews! (*pic 2*).

The greetings inside are in Welsh and English and the cards cost £8.50 per pack of 10 cards plus postage, each pack containing five of each design. They are available from the railway's shops, by phone from 01766 516022 or online at www.festrail.co.uk/shop.

The Talyllyn Railway's 2025 Christmas card is photo-based, featuring original Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch' and train in a snow-covered landscape near Brynglas (*pic 3*). Again the festive message inside is in Welsh and English and a pack of five cards costs £3.99 from the railway's shops or plus £3.95 UK postage – orders can be taken over the phone at 01654 711012 and on the TR website at www.talyllyn.co.uk

A festive photo adorns the Fairbourne Railway Christmas card (*pic 4*), featuring a Santa Special train on the 12¼-inch gauge line. The cards cost £7.50 per pack of 12, including UK postage, and can be obtained via the railway's website, www.fairbournerailway.com, or from the FR stand at the National Festival of Railway Modelling which is being held at the NEC Birmingham on 22nd-23rd November.

The Corris Railway's 2025 card is an artistic design combining monochrome and colour as Santa watches a train departing from the line's Maespoeth Junction station (*pic 5*). The cards are offered as packs of five at a cost of £5 per pack plus £1 postage or post free for four packs or more, from John A Knight, 40 Fladgate Road, Leytonstone, London E11 1LY – cheques made payable to Corris Railway. Current and previous year cards are also available from the Corris web shop at www.corris.co.uk/products/christmas-cards

Finally in our card offering we have the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway cards, featuring designs by renowned transport artist Jonathan Clay, headlined this year by a seasonal scene showing Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl' and its Pickering carriages at Cyfronydd (*pic 6*).

This and other designs, all with greetings in English and Welsh, are available through the W&LLR website www.wllr.org.uk, in packs of five at £2.50 plus £2.95 UK postage on the total order (overseas £6). Orders of four packs will receive an extra pack free. Orders can also be made by post, with a cheque made payable to W&L Sales, from W&LLR Cards (NGW), 7 Sutherland Grove, Perton, South Staffs WV6 7PA.

We've been sent three calendars to choose from this year – firstly from the FF&WHR (*pic 7*) which follows the usual format of landscape A4 folding down to A3 to reveal a high quality image from the railway and plenty of space for writing appointments in the date boxes. Cost is £8.95, ordered in similar way to the cards.

The Talyllyn calendar (*pic 8*) is to a similar size and format, though with extra little snippets of information alongside the calendar dates. The pictures are all of interest, ranging from a recreation at Nant Gwernol of a journey made by the railway's owners in 1895 to loco no 3 'Sir Handel' on the wharf at Tywyn with

5

arrow gauge cheer

bright yellow main line class 37 diesel 'Rheillffordd Talyllyn Railway' alongside. The calendar costs £8.00 plus £3.95 post, and again can be ordered from the same outlets as for the cards.

Finally we always look forward to the calendar from one of our most regular contributors, Joey Evans. His 2026 calendar (*pic 9*) is to the popular A4 folding out to A3 format, each spread featuring one of the excellent photos showing why we publish his work so often! Copies of the calendar can be ordered via Joey's website, www.joeyevansphotography.co.uk and cost £9.99 plus post and packing.

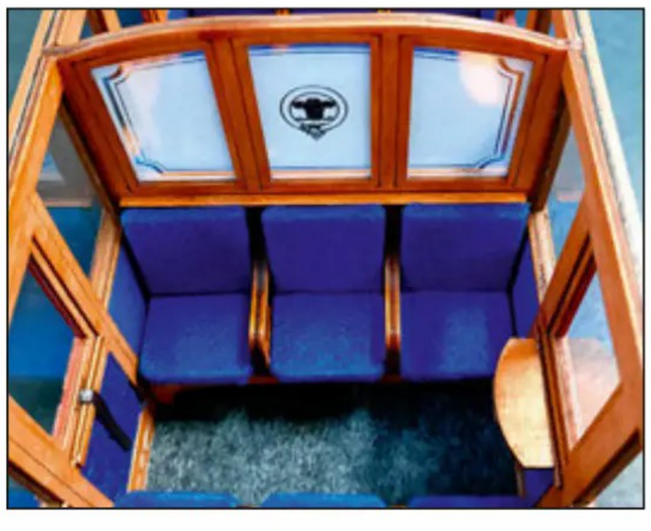
■ While 16mm scale models of the Talyllyn Railway's rolling stock are plentiful, this from Coach & Wagon Works is one of the most detailed yet. It's also something new as bogie carriage no 24 is one of three built for the TR by the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge Works from 2023.

The kit has a birch-faced ply body and includes everything needed to complete the carriage. The bogies and wheels are metal and there are the TR's signature sprung side buffers, brass door handles and all the decals.

Inside detail extends to fabrics, carpets, pictures and even mirrors, all visible as the roof is removable and interior lighting supplied.

The kit comes with 32mm gauge wheels – 45mm versions are not an option, but also on offer is a 'Premium' body kit only – no wheels, bogies, buffers, hooks or decals, allowing the builder to build to their own desires.

Produced by Coach & Wagon Works
Web: www.coachandwagonworks.co.uk
Price: Deluxe kit £295, Premium £195



■ Bachmann Europe is steadily adding to its Scenecraft range of ready-built and hand-painted resin structures for NG7, 7mm to the foot narrow gauge. Latest additions, arriving in shops around now, are this corrugated iron engine shed (above), of the kind found on many an industrial line, and a water tower with chain (right).

The recommended retail price for the shed is £89.95, the tower £49.95, and more details of these and other structures in the growing range for NG7 can be found online at www.bachmann.co.uk

VIEWPOINT

Glyn Valley new-build

I can't have been the only ***NGW*** reader who did an excited double-take of the news headline in issue 197, 'Glyn Valley plans new-build loco', and at a further glance saw the 0-4-2 wheel arrangement. Was this at last a plan to resurrect one of the Beyer, Peacock tram locomotives, tragically all culled following the line's demise in 1935? (*Sadly not, as the new story relates the project will see the building of a Kerr, Stuart 0-4-2ST following the donation of a completed set of frames – Ed*).

Surely (the GVT tram loco) is the next obvious new-build project in the world of narrow gauge? The Glyn Valley Tramway Trust's publicity images showing a tram loco at Chirk strongly suggests this is the vision.

The GVT trams were a unique design, some way between one of Beyer, Peacock's road steam trams and a typical narrow-gauge loco. Far from being a forgotten design, they have been a popular prototype for modellers for many years in 16mm, and more recently in 009 scale, and run with rakes of quarry wagons and the GVT's simple carriage designs on many superb layouts, recreating the spirit of the tramway.

Of course, any news of a new-build is welcome, and shows the amazing progress the GVTT has made. I visited Chirk in April 2019 when the station site was still being cleared of woodland; now track and station foundations are in place. So to have been donated a new-build loco project is a fantastic step forward, bringing the prospect of steam again at Chirk closer to reality.

Paul Linnell

Andrew C replies: I can understand how that headline could have been misinterpreted! Will a Glyn Valley tram loco ever be the subject of a new-build project? Well on the evidence of this month's news pages, where we carry news of the building of a lost monster Hunslet class, the answer has to be never say never..

Cut up over Cress loco

There has been much hyperbole and misleading information, generated by a BBC South West radio programme, *Secret Dorset*, regarding Dorset's last agricultural railway (*the line serving a watercress farm – Ed*).

To clarify the line's loco, built locally in 1948, is **not** for sale. Neither is it an ex World War One trench loco.

It is known as 'The Watercress Queen' and is the fourth loco to work the line. The loco is a four-wheel petrol hydraulic, with a Honda engine, and the line is 1ft 6in gauge.

"Surely the Glyn Valley Tramway loco is the next obvious new-build in the world of narrow gauge?..."

Above right: No tram loco this time (*see the letter from Paul Linnell*) – the donated set of Kerr, Stuart Tattoo class frames at the Glyn Valley Tramway Trust's site in Chirk. ***Photo: GVTT***

Right: 'The Watercress Queen' – an industrial locomotive still very much in use on a watercress farm in Dorset, according to the letter this month from *Anthony Heale-Barton*.

Below right: *Keith Chester* sent in this photo showing what he describes as one of the more attractive narrow gauge steam locos preserved in Germany. Former DB no 99 253, built by Krauss in 1908 (5929), was the last of a trio of 0-6-2Ts delivered by the Munich factory to the metre gauge Walhallabahn in Bavaria between 1902 and 1908.

First opened in 1889, the 23km-long line closed to passengers in 1960 and freight in 1968. 99 253 has been plinthed in Regensburg since 1976 and is well protected against the elements.

The loco is considered an integral part of the railway, it is used regularly during the season to transfer cress from the beds to the store sheds. It is serviced annually locally and kept stored safely in the on-site barn during the winter months.
Please note this is a working railway, please ask permission to visit. My thanks to the on-site staff for the information and permission to use photographs of the loco.

Anthony Heale-Barton

Andrew C replies: We report further on this subject in this issue's news pages – watercress lines do seem to generate a lot of interest despite being some of the most obscure examples of narrow gauge industry...

The editor welcomes letters on any narrow gauge subject for potential use on this page. Letters may be shortened or edited. Send to editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk or 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys SY21 0BD

That was the year that...

Narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy...

Extracts from *Narrow Gauge News*, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join up, go to www.ngrs.org.uk or see the

From 60 years ago

Narrow Gauge down the M1

On the morning of Saturday 21st August, a 2ft gauge Bagnall locomotive could have been seen travelling down the M1 to London from Leicestershire at up to 50mph! This does not herald the arrival of a narrow gauge main line in Great Britain, but was, of course, the moving of our locomotive 'Peter', an 0-4-0ST of 1917 from the Cliffe Hill Granite Co Ltd, to our site at Brockham, where it is proposed to make this the first loco in steam regularly at the museum.

The actual loading had taken place the previous evening and had been no easy task, even though the engine weighed only 3½ tons... The company's breakdown lorry, a massive American vehicle, backed up to Peter, but the construction of the vehicle prevented it lifting the engine more than about a foot off the ground, and even this lifted the front wheels of the lorry.

The jib was brought in a little and this time the lorry could move without the front wheels lifting, but it was judged unsafe to drive up a steep slope to a derrick where a full lift could be made. It was therefore decided to carry the loco swinging from the back of the lorry about a mile down the road into the bottom of the main pit where another derrick could be used. This was accomplished with our lorry trailing behind it.

Peter was soon swinging high above our lorry and was lowered onto its deck, but proved about three inches too long for the tailboard to be brought up, so only one side could be secured. The lorry deck is steel so no chocks could be laid down, the loco brakes could not be applied as the brake column is missing, and the fixing chain passing round the chassis of both vehicles was able to slide several inches.

So we watched the lorry start up the slope with considerable misgivings. These feelings were justified when Peter suddenly moved back and the tailboard lurched alarmingly, but the top of the slope was successfully reached.

On returning at 7am the next day, I was disheartened to see that the centre buffer of the loco was protruding through the front board of the lorry deck, though this did mean we could now secure the tailboard properly! We started off, and the thump on the back of the cab now and again restrained Bill Suffolk, the driver, from braking too sharply. With about nine inches of unavoidable free movement, Peter rolled back and forth disconcertingly...

(*NGN, December 1965*)

We make no apologies for featuring Brockham for a second successive issue – what a tale! It's also a demonstration how different times were in those days, imagine the response if a loco move was attempted in such a manner today...

Peter never did steam at Brockham – we believe the only loco to do so was the 3ft gauge Peckett 'Scaldwell' and then only briefly to move it into a shed. But after transferring with the rest of the Brockham collection to Amberely Museum Peter was fully restored and is a regular performer on the museum's running line today, most recently returning from overhaul in 2022 as seen below.

Penrhyn Quarries Ltd, Bethesda, Caernarvonshire (*sic*)

Mr Sydney Moir of the Transvaal has written with further news, about the six Penrhyn locos sent to Mufreesboro, Tennessee. They duly arrived in the USA about 20th August. On 5th September 'Winifred' and 'Nesta' were still on the pier where they had been unloaded. The others had gone to Tennessee by road, two at a time.

They had all been purchased by an antique dealer and were to be sold by auction on 15th September. Presumably the dealer hoped to make money out of the current boom for 'tourist' railroads in parks etc, in the USA, but as our correspondent remarks "of course he has completely overlooked the need for spare parts" (though the purchase of these engines in pairs of the same type may well permit eventual cannibalisation). (*NGN, December 1965)*

None of the six ever worked in the USA, which we should be grateful for as none of them were cannibalised either! Instead they disappeared into storage, Winifred at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway museum (below). Attempts at repatriation failed until in 2012 Julian Birley and friends brought home Winifred, Barclay 0-4-0 'Glyder' and Avonside 0-4-0 'Ogwen'.

YouTube Watch: online NG films

The online video site YouTube is a great source of narrow gauge items. If you've seen a clip that our readers would enjoy, why not send in the link?

■ Building a narrow gauge model railway and need some inspiration? This will do it... 'Brong Hebog' is a 25ft long 009 layout portraying the area around Beddgelert on the Welsh Highland Railway, with superb scenic sections some seven feet deep – it's a superb model that has delighted many a model railway exhibition visitor, as this video shows. **bit.ly/46QnHUd**

Coming Up with the Goods

Donald Brooks **recalls a 1979 visit to a line in the suburbs of Dresden still carrying heavy freight in transporter wagons.**

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and the two parts of Germany were subsequently reunited, virtually every aspect of life changed for the people of the DDR (East Germany). The country's narrow gauge steam railways were rare exceptions, happily surviving intact. As Keith Chester remarked in the text accompanying his evocative 1978 pictures of Wernigerode in ***NGW***190, almost exactly the same photos could be taken half a century later.

In some respects this should not be a surprise. Even in the 1970s most of 750mm and 1000mm gauge lines in the DDR were under state heritage protection, Denkmalschutz. Apart from the Pressnitztalbahn, closed in 1984, the long-term result has been that today the same stock still works the same routes as it did in the late 1970s.

Above: 2-10-2T 99 1788-1, built in 1955 by the Karl Marx works (formerly Orenstein & Koppel) at Babelsberg, runs over Schmiedeberg Viaduct on the upper half of the line, on the 14.28 mixed from Freital-Hainsberg to Kipsdorf.

Below: 99 1788-1 waits to leave Dippoldiswalde on an impressively long goods train for Freital-Hainsberg. Sister 99 1794-9 stands alongside in one of the platform roads.

Photos by Donald Brooks, May 1979

But while in some senses nothing has changed, in other respects almost everything has. In 1979 I discovered the Weisseritztalbahn, a 750mm gauge line, built in the early 1880s and which runs for 26.3km from Freital-Hainsberg to Kurort Kipsdorf. Despite being located in the suburbs of Dresden, a mere 10km or 15 minutes by S-Bahn from the city centre, this line never seems to have proven particularly popular with British enthusiasts.

In 1979 the Weisseritztalbahn, like all the other DDR narrow gauge lines, was part of the Deutsche Reichsbahn, the state railway operator, and an integral part of the country's transport network, for goods as well as passengers. The weekday passenger timetable was tailored to the needs of the local workers and students, with heavy leisure traffic at weekends.

On Mondays to Fridays six return trips ran over the whole line, with a few short workings, though likely few enthusiasts saw the first train of the day, the 04.00 from Dippoldiswalde, the major intermediate station – or the last train back, which arrived at 23.29.

Mixed trains daily

The line had fine scenery throughout, climbing 351 metres on gradients as steep as 1 in 33. But even more remarkable was the heavy goods traffic, with several freight or mixed trains daily, serving half a dozen industrial sites as well as the line's own yards. Much of this was conveyed in standard gauge wagons on transporters (Rollwagen) reminiscent of the Manifold Valley. The long trains made an impressive sight, quite dwarfing the narrow gauge 2-10-2Ts that hauled them.

Today a single passenger train set makes just two return workings over the complete line, with a further trip halfway, and the timetable starts at the altogether more civilised hour of 09.25, finishing by 18.47. The railway is now purely a tourist line, funded by the local authorities.

As the chill winds of economic reality blow over Saxony there have been recent threats to steam railway budgets, despite the massive amount of infrastructure expenditure on rebuilding the Weisseritztalbahn after the devastating floods of 2002.

And goods traffic has of course long since ceased, gone along with the industries it supported. As Keith said, you can still take the photos today but the atmosphere is not the same. We were lucky to have seen the real thing in the 1970s. **NGW**

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